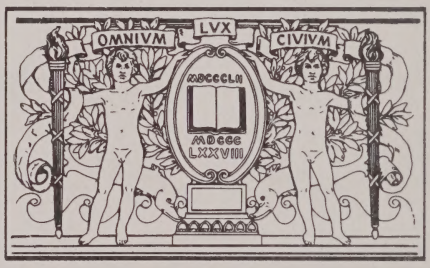
BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY
3 9999 08656 089 1



BOSTON
PUBLIC
LIBRARY

Convention of Municipalities at Rochester N.Y.
1848 See page 9.2 and 9.3
294

Jos. P. Hazard

MODERN SPIRITUALISM:

ITS

FACTS AND FANATICISMS,

ITS

CONSISTENCIES AND CONTRADICTIONS.

WITH

AN APPENDIX.

BY

E. W. CAPRON.

BOSTON:
PUBLISHED BY BELA MARSH, 15 FRANKLIN ST.
NEW YORK:
PARTRIDGE AND BRITTAN.
PHILADELPHIA:
SOLD BY FOWLERS, WELLS & CO., 231 ARCH ST.
1855.

7603
.30
Copy 2

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1855, by
E. W. CAPRON,
In the Clerk's Office of the District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.

Stereotyped by
HOBART & ROBBINS,
New England Type and Stereotype Foundery,
BOSTON.

To my Friend,

GEORGE WILLETS,

ONE OF THE PIONEERS IN RATIONAL SPIRITUALISM, WHO STOOD CALM AND FIRM IN THE FRONT RANKS OF TRUTH'S DEFENDERS WHEN OTHERS FALTERED; WHO HAS BRAVED THE SCORN AND CONTUMELY OF FRIENDS AND KINDRED, AND WHO HAS BEEN, IN MANY WAYS THE WORLD KNOWS NOT OF, A MARTYR TO THE CAUSE OF TRUTH,

This Volume

IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED.

PREFACE.

We find "the world turned upside-down" by a new and strange class of manifestations called *spiritual.* Like most new thoughts of modern times, America gave it birth; but it has since spread all over the globe, and awakened new and novel inquiries wherever man understands the means of communicating to his fellows the discoveries he has made.

When, how, and by whom, did it begin? How has it been conducted? What are its just claims to respect? To answer these questions is the object of this work.

An attentive observer of its commencement and progress, the author has endeavored to be an impartial witness; and, having enjoyed the personal acquaintance of its chief supporters, feels qualified to present the favorable and adverse facts relating to these strange phenomena. The advocates and opponents of the new doctrine could hardly differ more than they do, and it is not expected that a faithful history will, in all respects, please either party; but let the truth be boldly spoken, even though it offend both.

E. W. C.

Philadelphia, October, 1854.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION — MANIFESTATIONS IN ANCIENT AND MODERN TIMES — THE WESLEY FAMILY, &C., ... 11

CHAPTER II.

FIRST DISTURBANCES AT HYDESVILLE — EVENTS PREVIOUS TO THE SOUNDS BEING HEARD WITH THE FOX FAMILY — TESTIMONY OF WITNESSES — FIRST MEDIUMS, &C. &C., ... 33

CHAPTER III.

FIRST MANIFESTATIONS IN ROCHESTER, N. Y. — ALARM OF THE FAMILY — OPPOSITION OF MR. CALVIN R. BROWN — VIOLENT DEMONSTRATIONS — ENTHUSIASTIC AND FANATICAL BELIEVERS — ABSURD DIRECTIONS FOLLOWED — DISAPPOINTMENT AND UNBELIEF — PROOFS AND CASES STATED — FIRST CASE OF TELEGRAPHING, ... 57

CHAPTER IV.

SUSPENSION OF THE MANIFESTATIONS IN THE FOX FAMILY — RETURN OF THE SPIRITS — DIRECTIONS FOR PUBLIC INVESTIGATION — THE FIRST MEETINGS — EXCITEMENT ON THE REPORT OF COMMITTEES — RIOTOUS DEMONSTRATIONS — INCREASE OF MEDIA FOR RAPPING, WRITING, &C. &C., 88

CHAPTER V.

MANIFESTATIONS IN AUBURN, N. Y. — VISIT OF CATHARINE FOX — REMARKABLE TESTS AND PROOFS OF SPIRIT POWER — SLANDERS OF THE PRESS — STRANGE DEMONSTRATIONS — A NEW MEDIUM, MRS. SARAH A. TAMLIN — SPIRIT MUSIC, ... 101

CHAPTER VI.

CONTINUED MANIFESTATIONS AT AUBURN — THE "APOSTOLIC CIRCLE" — THE MOUNTAIN COVE MOVEMENT — ITS FORMATION, PROGRESS, AND DISSOLUTION — ASSUMPTION, FANATICISM AND FOLLY, ... 113

CHAPTER VII.

MANIFESTATIONS AT STRATFORD, CONN., IN THE HOUSE OF REV. ELIAKIM PHELPS, D. D. — REMARKABLE EXHIBITIONS OF POWER — SINGULAR OCCURRENCES — IMAGE-MAKING — DESTRUCTION OF FURNITURE — INCENDIARY SPIRITS — THE SPIRITS IDENTIFIED — UNHAPPY SPIRITS, FROM THE REMEMBRANCE OF WRONG DONE IN THIS WORLD — WRONG-DOING REVEALED — DIRECTIONS GIVEN FOR RESTORING ILL-GOTTEN GAINS — DISCONTINUANCE OF THE MANIFESTATIONS, ... 132

CHAPTER VIII.

MANIFESTATIONS IN NEW YORK CITY — VISIT OF THE FOX FAMILY — MEETING OF LITERATI — THEIR REPORT — OPPONENTS — THE PRESS OF THE CITY — HORACE GREELEY — RETURN OF THE FAMILY TO ROCHESTER — FORMATION OF CIRCLES IN NEW YORK — CREDULITY — MR. CHARLES PARTRIDGE — OCCURRENCES AT HIS HOUSE — EDWARD P. FOWLER — CONFERENCE MEETING — MRS. BROWN — JUDGE EDMONDS, &C., &C., ... 172

CHAPTER IX.

MANIFESTATIONS IN BOSTON — THE FIRST MEDIUM — SPIRITUAL PHILOSOPHER — POSITION OF THE PRESS — LA ROY SUNDERLAND — CREDULITY — SHADRACH BARNES AND PHEBE NEWELL — REACTION — STATEMENT OF RUFUS ELMER — REV. WM. M. FERNALD — JOHN M. SPEAR — THE NEW MOTIVE POWER, &C., ... 204

CHAPTER X.

MANIFESTATIONS IN PROVIDENCE, R. I. — EARLY MANIFESTATIONS — IMPORTANT PHYSICAL MANIFESTATIONS IN PRESENCE OF MRS. WILBUR, MEDIUM —

STATEMENT OF "D. B. H." — FANATICISM — LETTERS OF MRS. SARAH HELEN WHITMAN, ... 226

CHAPTER XI.

MANIFESTATIONS IN PHILADELPHIA — FIRST ATTEMPTS TO OBTAIN RESPONSES — REMARKABLE PERSEVERANCE AND PATIENCE — DETAILS OF THE PROCEEDINGS IN THE FIRST CIRCLES — ORGANIZATION AND PROGRESS OF THE CAUSE — PUBLIC MEETINGS AND LECTURES, ... 251

CHAPTER XII.

MANIFESTATIONS AT TROY AND WATERFORD, N. Y. — EXCITEMENT AND VIOLENCE AT TROY — ATTEMPT TO DESTROY THE LIFE OF THE MEDIUM — INCREASE OF THE MANIFESTATIONS — REMARKABLE CASES, &C., . . 270

CHAPTER XIII.

MANIFESTATIONS IN CINCINNATI — VISIT OF MRS. BUSHNELL, THE MEDIUM — FIRST INVESTIGATIONS — VISIT OF THE FOX FAMILY — INCREASE OF BELIEVERS, ... 288

CHAPTER XIV.

MANIFESTATIONS IN BUFFALO, N. Y. — THE EXPOSÉ OF THE UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS — COUNTER STATEMENTS — MRS. FISH'S LETTER — DR. LEE TO THE TRIBUNE, AND THE EDITOR'S REMARKS — EFFECTS OF THE EXPOSÉ, 309

CHAPTER XV.

MANIFESTATIONS IN WASHINGTON, D. C. — CONGRESSIONAL MEDIUMS — WRITING MEDIUMS — VISIT OF THE FOX FAMILY — GOV. TALLMADGE — SINGULAR MANIFESTATIONS IN DRAWING — MEMORIAL TO CONGRESS — DEBATE IN THE SENATE, &C., ... 335

CHAPTER XVI.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS ON THE SPIRITUAL MANIFESTATIONS AND THE PROGRESS OF SPIRITUALISM, ... 376

APPENDIX.

COMMENTS OF THE PRESS AT AUBURN, N. Y., ... 383
COMMENTS OF THE PRESS AT ROCHESTER, ... 386
JOHN W. HURN, ROCHESTER, ... 392
REV. DR. POTTS, ... 393
ROCHESTER AMERICAN, ... 393
N. Y. COMMERCIAL ADVERTISER, ... 394
THE NORTHERN CHRISTIAN ADVOCATE, ... 396
MAJOR M. M. NOAH, ... 396
REV. A. H. JERVIS, ... 398
REV. JOHN M. AUSTIN, STATEMENT OF, ... 401
NEW YORK TRIBUNE, ... 402
J. STANLEY GRIMES, STATEMENT OF, ... 403
REPLY BY H. D. BARRON, ... 406
THE NEW YORK EXPRESS, ... 407
T. S. ARTHUR AND HIS HOME GAZETTE, ... 408
THE BOSTON INVESTIGATOR, ... 409
C. C. BURR AND HIS BROTHER HEMAN, ... 416
PROF. HARE, OF PHILADELPHIA, ... 425
HON. N. P. TALLMADGE AND THE NATIONAL INTELLIGENCER, ... 427
LETTER OF HON. JOHN W. EDMONDS, ... 427

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION.

In searching out the history of Spiritual Manifestations, or occurrences analogous to what is now known as the modern manifestations, the discovery is at once made that they date back to a period so remote that the history of no age or country is exempt from accounts of them. Histories dating back further than anything known or recorded in the Bible, are proof of their being known at a period beyond the compilation or writing of that book; while the book itself contains so many evidences of precisely similar occurrences, that the attentive reader cannot resist the conviction that the occurrences were the same in fact, whatever the people of that age may have thought of them, or however exaggerated they made their importance in the record. By comparing the story of the Witch of Endor with any ordinary case of spirit-seeing clairvoyance of the present time, its wonder, mystery and sacredness, beyond that sacredness that truth should always command, at once disappear. The spirit that passed before the face of Job, "in thoughts of the visions of night, when deep sleep falleth upon man," is no uncommon occurrence at the present day; while the handwriting on the walls of Belshazzar's palace has its analogy in hundreds of instances of modern spiritual manifestations.

To come down to the more modern occurrences, which, however, reach still far enough back to be one of the numerous connecting links in the chain of events which bind the past to the present, it is only necessary to record the occurrences in the Wesley family in England, in the year 1716, which contain many features devel-

oped in modern times, as a specimen of thousands of others. In compiling this whole history I entirely disclaim any desire to feed the popular credulity, or to excite the wonder-loving faculties of the ignorant and superstitious. They have already been made the prey of artful and designing men too long; and I am more desirous of stripping nature of the *super*naturalism which has been thrown around her by the crafty plunderers of the ignorant, than to have their superstitions wrought up to a still higher state of excitement. It is for this reason that I deem it important that a full explanation of the facts embodied in this work should be made, and a reasonable and *natural* explanation given of these phenomena, which shall satisfy all that those who have investigated the most thoroughly have really the least fear and superstitious feeling in regard to the matter. While they have thus, by investigation, divested themselves of all feeling of superstition, they have become fully satisfied of the importance of the manifestations, as teaching the proximity of spirits, and their power to make themselves known to persons who still remain in the visible body. I disclaim, at the outset, all intentions of advocating *super*naturalism. I place too high an estimate on the perfect workings of the laws of nature, as set in motion by the "Great Spirit" which pervades, encompasses and governs all things, to attribute the beautiful and fast-spreading facts, proving a direct influx of spiritual influences into the world, to anything more or less than another link in the great chain of nature's law which is but just developing itself to man. The *why* of its appearance just at this time, or the reason why it has not become more extensively known before, it would be as impossible to tell as it would be to tell *why* all the great discoveries in science were not made known to man at once, instead of waiting the slow development of the intellect, and thus preparing him for the gradual reception of the mighty changes which have taken place from the early stages of human development to the present time. As the earth was not formed in a few short years in its present state of geological development, so man has not all at once sprung to his pres-

ent state of refinement and knowledge. Gradual growth in the refining process seems to be the universal law of nature.

The entire separation, made by the old *philosophy* and theology, between spirit and matter, has led thousands of philosophical minds to reject all idea of any existence of persons beyond the tangible form which men now occupy. They have failed entirely of obtaining, from old traditions, proof which looked rational to them of any such existence. The great difficulty in the way of such minds, as before intimated, is the great break in the chain between tangible and (to us) intangible substance. The fact that men could not, in a normal state, see the more refined substance to which we give the name spirit, has led theologians to declare that there was an existence, not only intangible, but absolutely something beyond, and *entirely separate* from, matter.

Men of philosophical minds, not having positive proof of spiritual existence, have discovered this glaring inconsistency, and rejected every theory offered in favor of any existence beyond the decay of the visible body. But the developments of the last few years in clairvoyance and psychology have convinced many of the sceptics in regard to future existence that there is a positive identity of spirits of persons who have passed on beyond this state of existence.

As long ago as the year 1716, the Wesley family (father of John Wesley) were disturbed by sounds and rappings, with other occurrences, which in some respects equal, and in many resemble, the modern manifestations. Nine of that family testify to the truth of the statements, as well as others. This narrative may be found in a book called "Memoirs of the Wesley Family," by Adam Clark, LL. D., F. A. S., second edition, 1846.

NARRATIVE DRAWN UP BY MR. JOHN WESLEY, AND PUBLISHED BY HIM IN THE ARMINIAN MAGAZINE.

"When I was very young, I heard several letters read, wrote to my elder brother by my father, giving an account of strange disturbances, which were in his house at Epworth, Lincolnshire.

"When I went down thither, in the year 1720, I carefully inquired into the particulars. I spoke to each of the persons who were then in the house, and took down what each could testify, of his or her own knowledge, the sum of which was this: —

"On December 2nd, 1716, while Robert Brown, my father's servant, was sitting with one of the maids, a little before ten at night, in the dining-room which opened into the garden, they both heard one knocking at the door. Quickly it knocked again, and groaned. 'It is Mr. Turpine,' said Robert; 'he has the stone, and used to groan so.' He opened the door again twice or thrice, the knocking being twice or thrice repeated; but still seeing nothing, and being a little startled, they rose and went up to bed. When Robert came to the top of the garret stairs, he saw a hand-mill, which was at a little distance, whirled about very swiftly. The next day he and the maid related these things to the other maid, who laughed heartily, and said, 'What a couple of fools you are! I defy anything to frighten me.' After churning in the evening, she put the butter in the tray, and had no sooner carried it into the dairy, than she heard a knocking on the shelf where several puncheons of milk stood, first above the shelf, then below. She took the candle, and searched both above and below; but being able to find nothing, threw down butter, tray and all, and ran away for life. The next evening, between five and six o'clock, my sister Molly, then about twenty years of age, sitting in the dining-room reading, heard as if it were the door that led into the hall open, and a person walking in, that seemed to have on a silk night-gown, rustling and trailing along. It seemed to walk round her, then to the door, then round again; but she could see nothing. She thought, 'It signifies nothing to run away; for, whatever it is, it can run faster than me.' So she rose, put her book under her arm, and walked slowly away. After supper, she was sitting with my sister Sukey (about a year older than her), in one of the chambers, and telling her what had happened. She made quite light of it, telling her, 'I wonder you are so easily frightened; I would fain see what would frighten me.' Presently a

knocking began under the table. She took the candle and looked, but could find nothing. Then the iron casement began to clatter, and the lid of a warming-pan. Next the latch of the door moved up and down without ceasing. She started up, leaped into the bed without undressing, pulled the bed-clothes over her head, and never ventured to look up till next morning. A night or two after, my sister Hetty, a year younger than my sister Molly, was waiting as usual, between nine and ten, to take away my father's candle, when she heard one coming down the garret stairs, walking slowly by her, then going down the best stairs, then up the back stairs, and up the garret stairs ; at every step it seemed as if the house shook from top to bottom. Just then my father knocked. She went in, took his candle, and got to bed as soon as possible. In the morning she told this to my eldest sister, who told her, 'You know I believe none of these things ; pray let me take away the candle to-night, and I will find out the trick.' She accordingly took my sister Hetty's place, and had no sooner taken away the candle than she heard a noise below. She hastened down stairs to the hall, where the noise was ; but it was then in the kitchen. She ran into the kitchen, where it was drumming on the inside of the screen. When she went round, it was drumming on the outside ; and so always on the side opposite to her. Then she heard a knocking at the back kitchen door. She ran to it, unlocked it softly, and, when the knocking was repeated, suddenly opened it ; but nothing was to be seen. As soon as she had shut it, the knocking began again. She opened it again, but could see nothing. When she went to shut the door, it was violently thrust against her ; she let it fly open, but nothing appeared. She went again to shut it, and it was again thrust against her ; but she set her knee and her shoulder to the door, forced it to, and turned the key. Then the knocking began again ; but she let it go on, and went up to bed. However, from that time she was thoroughly convinced that there was no imposture in the affair.

"The next morning, my sister telling my mother what had

happened, she said, 'If I hear anything myself, I shall know how to judge.' Soon after, she begged her to come into the nursery. She did, and heard in the corner of the room, as it were, the violent rocking of a cradle; but no cradle had been there for some years. She was convinced it was preternatural, and earnestly prayed it might not disturb her in her own chamber in the hours of retirement; and it never did. She now thought it was proper to tell my father. But he was extremely angry, and said, 'Sukey, I am ashamed of you; these boys and girls frighten one another; but you are a woman of sense, and should know better. Let me hear of it no more.'

"At six in the evening he had family prayers as usual. When he began the prayer for the king, a knocking began all around the room; and a thundering knock attended the amen. The same was heard from this time every morning and evening while the prayer for the king was repeated.

"Being informed that Mr. Hoole, the vicar of Haxey (an eminently pious and sensible man), could give me some further information, I walked over to him. He said, 'Robert Brown came over to me, and told me your father desired my company. When I came, he gave me an account of all that had happened; particularly the knocking during family prayer. But that evening (to my great satisfaction) we had no knocking at all. But between nine and ten a servant came in, and said, 'Old Jeffrey is coming (that was the name of one that died in the house), for I hear the signal.' This, they informed me, was heard every night about a quarter before ten. It was toward the top of the house, on the outside, at the north-east corner, resembling the loud creaking of a saw; or rather that of a windmill, when the body of it is turned about, in order to shift the sails to the wind. We then heard a knocking over our heads; and Mr. Wesley, catching up a candle, said, 'Come, sir, now you shall hear for yourself." We went up stairs; he with much hope, and I, to say the truth, with much fear. When we came into the nursery, it was knocking in the next room; when we were there, it was

knocking in the nursery. And there it continued to knock, though we came in, particularly at the head of the bed (which was of wood), in which Hetty and two of her younger sisters lay. Mr. Wesley, observing that they were much affected, though asleep, sweating and trembling exceedingly, was very angry; and, pulling out a pistol, was going to fire at the place from whence the sound came. But I catched him by the arm, and said, 'Sir, you are convinced this is something preternatural. If so, you cannot hurt it; but you give it power to hurt you.' He then went close to the place, and said sternly, 'Thou deaf and dumb devil, why dost thou fright these children, that cannot answer for themselves? Come to me, in my study, that am a man.' Instantly it knocked his knock (the particular knock which he always used at the gate), as if it would shiver the board in pieces, and we heard nothing more that night.' Till this time, my father had never heard the least disturbances in his study. But the next evening, as he attempted to go into his study (of which none had any key but himself), when he opened the door, it was thrust back with such violence as had like to have thrown him down. However, he thrust the door open, and went in. Presently there was knocking, first on one side, then on the other; and, after a time, in the next room, wherein my sister Nancy was. He went into that room, and (the noise continuing) adjured it to speak; but in vain. He then said, 'These spirits love darkness; put out the candle, and perhaps it will speak.' She did so, and he repeated his adjuration; but still there was only knocking, and no articulate sound. Upon this he said, 'Nancy, two Christians are an overmatch for the devil. Go all of you down stairs; it may be, when I am alone, he will have courage to speak.' When she was gone, a thought came in, and he said, 'If thou art the spirit of my son Samuel, I pray knock three knocks, and no more.' Immediately all was silence; and there was no more knocking at all that night. I asked my sister Nancy (then about fifteen years old) whether she was not afraid when my father used that adjuration. She answered, she was sadly afraid it would speak

when she put out the candle; but she was not at all afraid in the daytime, when it walked after her, as she swept the chambers, as it constantly did, and seemed to sweep after her; only she thought he might have done it for her, and saved her the trouble. By this time all my sisters were so accustomed to these noises that they gave them little disturbance. A gentle tapping at their bed-head usually began between nine and ten at night. They then commonly said to each other, 'Jeffrey is coming; it is time to go to sleep.' And if they heard a noise in the day, and said to my youngest sister, 'Hark, Kezzy, Jeffrey is knocking above,' she would run up stairs, and pursue it from room to room, saying she desired no better diversion.

"A few nights after, my father and mother were just gone to bed, and the candle was not taken away, when they heard three blows, and a second, and a third three, as it were with a large oaken staff, struck upon a chest that stood by the bed-side. My father immediately arose, put on his night-gown, and, hearing great noises below, took the candle and went down; my mother walked by his side. As they went down the broad stairs, they heard as if a vessel full of silver was poured upon my mother's breast, and ran jingling down to her feet. Quickly after, there was a sound as if a large iron ball was thrown among many bottles under the stairs; but nothing was hurt. Soon after, our large mastiff dog came and ran to shelter himself between them. While the disturbances continued, he used to bark and leap, and snap on one side and the other, and that frequently before any person in the room heard any noise at all. But after two or three days, he used to tremble and creep away before the noise began; and by this the family knew it was at hand; nor did the observation ever fail. A little before my father and mother came into the hall, it seemed as if a very large coal was violently thrown upon the floor, and dashed all in pieces; but nothing was seen. My father then cried out, 'Sukey, do you not hear? All the pewter is thrown about the kitchen.' But when they looked, all the pewter stood in its place. There then was a loud knock-

ing at the back door. My father opened it, but saw nothing. It was then at the fore door. He opened that, but it was still lost labor. After opening first the one, then the other, several times, he turned and went to bed. But the noises were so violent all over the house, that they could not sleep till four in the morning.

"Several gentlemen and clergymen now earnestly advised my father to quit the house; but he constantly answered, 'No; let the devil flee from me; I will never flee from the devil.' But he wrote to my eldest brother, at London, to come down. He was preparing so to do, when another letter came, informing him that the disturbances were over, after they had continued, the latter part of the time day and night, from the second of January to the end of January."

The following are copied from the same work, which contains some twelve or fifteen letters that passed between different members of the family on the subject of these disturbances.

LETTER III. — FROM MR. S. WESLEY TO HIS MOTHER.

"DEAR MOTHER: Those who are so wise as not to believe any supernatural occurrences, though ever so well attested, could find a hundred questions to ask about those strange noises you wrote me an account of; but, for my part, I know not what question to put which, if answered, would confirm me more in the belief of what you tell me. Two or three I have heard from others. Was there never a new maid or man in the house, that might play tricks? Was there nobody above, in the garrets, when the walking was there? Did all the family hear it together when they were in one room, or at one time? Did it seem all to be in the same place, at the same time? Could not cats, or rats, or dogs, be the sprites? Was the whole family asleep when my father and you went down stairs? Such doubts as these being replied to, though they could not, as God himself assures us, convince them who believe not Moses and the prophets, yet would strengthen such as do believe. As to my particular opinion con-

cerning the events foreboded by these noises, I cannot, I must confess, form any. I think, since it was not permitted to speak, all guesses must be in vain. The end of spirits' action is yet more hidden than that of men, and even this latter puzzles the most subtle politicians. That we may be struck so as to prepare for any ill, may, it is possible, be one design of Providence. It is surely our duty and wisdom to do so.

"Dear mother, I beg your blessing on your dutiful and affectionate son. S. Wesley.

"Jan. 19, 1716–17, Saturday, Dean's Yard, Westminster."

LETTER IV. — FROM MRS. WESLEY TO HER SON SAMUEL.

"January 25 or 27, 1716–17.

"Dear Sam.: Though I am not one of those that will believe nothing supernatural, but am rather inclined to think there would be frequent intercourse between good spirits and us, did not our deep lapse into sensuality prevent it; yet I was a great while ere I could credit anything of what the children and servants reported concerning the noises they heard in several parts of our house. Nay, after I had heard them myself, I was willing to persuade myself and them that it was only rats or weasels that disturbed us; and having been formerly troubled with rats, which were frighted away by sounding a horn, I caused a horn to be procured, and made them blow it all over the house. But from that night they began to blow, the noises were more loud and distinct, both day and night, than before; and that night we rose and went down, I was entirely convinced that it was beyond the power of any human creature to make such strange and various noises.

"As to your questions, I will answer them particularly; but withal, I desire my answers may satisfy none but yourself; for I would not have the matter imparted to any. We had both man and maid new this last Martimas, yet I do not believe either of them occasioned the disturbance, both for the reason above-mentioned, and because they were more frighted than anybody else.

Besides, we have often heard the noise when they were in the room by us; and the maid, particularly, was in such a panic that she was almost incapable of all business, nor durst ever go from one room to another, or stay by herself a minute, after it began to be dark.

"The man, Robert Brown, whom you well know, was most visited by it, lying in the garret, and has been often frighted down barefoot, and almost naked, not daring to stay alone to put on his clothes; nor do I think, if he had power, he would be guilty of such villany. When the walking was heard in the garret, Robert was in bed, in the next room, in sleep so sound that he never heard your father and me walk up and down, though he walked not softly I am sure. All the family has heard it together, in the same room, at the same time, particularly at family prayers. It always seemed to all present at the same place at the same time; though often, before any could say it is here, it would remove to another place.

"All the family, as well as Robin, were asleep when your father and I went down stairs, nor did they wake in the nursery when we held the candle close by them; only we observed that Hetty trembled exceedingly in her sleep, as she always did before the noise awaked her. It commonly was nearer her than the rest, which she took notice of, and was much frightened, because she thought it had a particular spite at her. I could multiply particular instances, but I forbear. I believe your father will write to you about it shortly. Whatever may be the design of Providence in permitting these things, I cannot say. 'Secret things belong to God.' But I entirely agree with you that it is our duty to prepare seriously for all events. S. Wesley."

The following is an extract from an account of one of the sisters (Nancy) to her brother Jack. It is testimony which goes to show that other things herein related were not entirely unknown to the "Wesley family."

"When five or six were sitting in the nursery together, a cradle would seem to be rocked in the room overhead, though no cradle had ever been there. One night she was sitting on the press bed, playing at cards with some of my sisters, when my sisters Molly, Hetty, Patty and Kezzy, were in the room, and Robert Brown. The bed on which my sister Nancy sat was lifted up with her on it. She leaped down, and said, 'Surely, old Jeffrey would not run away with her.' However, they persuaded her to sit down again, which she had scarce done when it was again lifted up, several times successively, to a considerable height; upon which she left her seat, and would not be prevailed upon to sit there any more.

"Whenever they began to mention Mr. S. it presently began to knock, and continued to do so until they changed the discourse. All the time my sister Sukey was writing her last letter to him it made a very great noise all round the room; and the night after she set out for London it knocked till morning, with scarce any intermission.

"Mr. Hoole read prayers once, but it knocked as usual at the prayers for the king and prince. The knockings at those prayers were only towards the beginning of the disturbances, for a week or thereabouts."

Although the disturbances generally ceased after a few weeks at the house of the Wesleys, we have good evidence that it was manifested frequently in the presence of one of the daughters for *thirty-four* years, and how much longer the history does not inform us. The following is a further extract on this subject:

"But there is a fact of which all Mr. Wesley's biographers are ignorant; namely, that Jeffrey, as the spirit was called, continued to molest some branches of the family for many years. We have seen that Miss Emily Wesley was the first who gave it the name Jeffrey, from an old man of that name who had died there; and that she was more disturbed by it than any of the

family. I have an original letter of hers to her brother John, dated February 16, 1750, thirty-four years after the time, as is generally supposed, that Jeffrey had discontinued his operations, in which he is named. Emily was now Mrs. Harper, having married a person of that name, an apothecary, who first lived in Epworth, and afterwards in London, or near it; and the letter is addressed to the Rev. Mr. John Wesley, Foundry.

"'DEAR BROTHER: I want most sadly to see you, and talk some hours with you, as in times past. Some things are too hard for me; these I want you to solve. One doctrine of yours, and of many more, namely, no happiness can be found in any or all things in this world; that, as I have sixteen years of my own experience which lie flatly against it, I want to talk with you about. Another thing is that wonderful thing called by us Jeffrey. You won't laugh at me for being superstitious, if I tell you how certainly that something calls on me against any extraordinary new affliction; but so little is known of the invisible world that I, at least, am not able to judge whether it be a friendly or an evil spirit. * * * * * EMILY HARPER.'"

The following remarks of Dr. Clark are so appropriate to this time and this subject that we give them in this place:

"The story of the disturbances at the parsonage house in Epworth is not unique. I myself, and several others of my particular acquaintance, were eye and ear witnesses of transactions of a similar kind, which could never be traced to any source of trick or imposture, and appeared to be the forerunners of two very tragical events in the disturbed family; after which no noise or disturbance ever took place. In the history of my own life I have related the matter in sufficient detail.

"Dr. Priestly, who first published the preceding papers, says of the whole story, that 'it is, perhaps, the best-authenticated and best-told story of the kind that is anywhere extant; on which account, and to exercise the ingenuity of some speculative persons,

he thought it not undeserving of being published.' — Preface, p. xi. After this concession, he then enters into a train of arguing, to show that there could be nothing supernatural in it; for Dr. P., as a materialist, could give no credit to any account of angels, spirits, &c., the existence of which he did not credit; and because he could see no good end to be answered by it, therefore he thinks he may safely conclude no miracle was wrought. Such argumentation can justify no man is disbelieving a story of this kind, told so circumstantially, and witnessed by such a number of persons, whose veracity was beyond doubt, and whose capability to judge between fact and fiction, trick and genuine operation, was beyond that of most persons, who, in any country or age, have come forward to give testimony on a subject of this nature. He at last gets rid of the whole matter thus: 'What appears most probable, at this distance of time, in the present case, is that it was a trick of the servants, assisted by some of their neighbors; and that nothing was meant by it besides puzzling the family and amusing themselves; and that such a secret should be kept, so that the matter was never discovered, is not at all to be wondered at.' We can scarcely suppose that this mode of reasoning satisfied the mind of Dr. Priestly, else he must have been satisfied much more easily on a subject which struck at the vitals of his own system, than he would have been on any doctrine relative to philosophy and chemistry. He had Mrs. Wesley's letter before him, which stated that the servants could not be employed in the work, for reasons which she there adduces; and especially because those very servants were often in the room with themselves when the disturbances were most rife. But all suppositions of this kind are completely nullified by the preceding letter of Mrs. Harper, formerly Emily Wesley, which states that even to thirty-four years afterward Jeffrey continued to molest her. Did her father's servants and the Epworth neighbors pursue her for thirty-four years through her various settlements from 1716 to 1750, and were even at that time playing their pranks against her in London? How ridiculous and absurd! And this is the very best solution of these facts

that Dr. Priestly could arrive at in deference to his system of materialism! The letter of Mrs. Harper I consider of vast importance, as it removes the last subterfuge of determinate incredulity and false philosophy on this subject.

"A philosopher should not be satisfied with the reasons advanced by Dr. Priestly. He who will maintain his creed in opposition to his senses, and the most undisguised testimony of the most respectable witnesses, had better at once, for his own credit's sake, throw the whole story into the region of doubt, where all such relations, no matter how authenticated,

> 'Upwhirled aloft,
> Fly o'er the back side of the world far off,
> Into a limbus large and broad!'

And instead of its being called the paradise of fools, it may be styled the limbus of philosophic materialists, into which they hurl whatever they cannot comprehend, choose not to believe, or please to call superstitious and absurd. And they treat such matters so, because they quadrate not with principles unfounded on the divine testimony, feebly supported by true philosophy, and contradictory to the plain, unbiased, good common sense of nineteen-twentieths of mankind.

"But my business is to relate facts, of which the reader must make what use he chooses."

Precisely similar occurrences took place in Winesburg, Germany, and other places, from the year 1825 to 1828, the authentic accounts of which are given in a work by Justinus Kerner, called "The Seeress of Provorst."

The "Seeress" was a clairvoyant, and both saw and heard the spirits of various persons.

From Mrs. Crowe's translation I make the following extract. On page 63 the account says:

"'These spirits were audible to many and various people, but

only accidentally; never when they were watched for. The sounds they made chiefly resembled *slight knockings*, as on the wall, table, bedstead, and sometimes in the air; rustling as of paper, rolling of balls, and pattering of feet.' On page 72, in speaking of a particular spirit, he says: 'His appearance was always preceded by knockings on the walls, noises in the air, and other sounds, which were heard by many different people, as can be testified to by more than twenty credible witnesses;' and on page 86: 'We went to bed about ten, and remained awake until eleven, when I fell asleep. About twelve, Mrs. H. (the Seeress) asked for some broth, and I was awakened by her sister getting out of bed to give it to her. She was scarcely in bed again when we heard a strange crackling and shuffling on the floor; then there was a knocking on the walls and Mrs. H.'s bed as with hammers. I watched Mrs. H. all the time. She lay quite quiet, with her hands on the coverlet; presently she began to speak, but without sitting up. Her conversation seemed to be addressed to something near her bed, which I could not see. By and by, she said, "The spectre is gone, but will return anon;" and then we again heard the sounds, and she spoke as before. Then I heard her say "Open it yourself;" and I saw, with an awe which I had not before felt, the cover of the book move as it lay on her bed, and it was opened by an unseen hand. I could not perceive the slightest motion on the part of Mrs. H. nor her bed.' "

Many similar accounts are related in this work, and some very singular transactions are testified to by Councillor Hahn, as having taken place in the Castle of Slawensick, in Silesia, of which he was an eye and ear witness.

Another incident, still later, was published in the Newark (N. J.) Daily Advertiser, in November, 1834, under the head of "Tale of the Marvel." It is as follows:

"Rumor with one of her ten thousand tongues brought us a mysterious story, yesterday, of a 'mysterious lady,' which so far

challenged credit, that we were induced to send a competent witness in the afternoon to procure more particular information. Our agent, after the fullest opportunity of observation, has returned this morning, and communicates the following facts, which we give without embellishment as he relates them. On Monday night of last week the family of Mr. Joseph Barron, living in the township of Woodbridge, about three miles from Rahway, in this county, were alarmed, after they had retired, by a loud thumping against the house. Mr. B.'s first impression was that some person was trying to break in; but further observation soon undeceived him. The thumping, however, continued at short intervals, until the family became so alarmed that Mr. B. called in some of his neighbors, who remained up with the family until daylight, when the thumping ceased. The next evening, after nightfall, the noise recommenced, when it was ascertained to be mysteriously connected with the movements of a servant girl in the family, — a white girl, about fourteen years of age. While passing a window on the stairs, for example, a sudden jar, accompanied with an explosive sound, broke a pane of glass, the girl at the same time being seized with a violent spasm. This, of course, very much alarmed her; and the physician, Dr. Drake, was sent for, came, and bled her (of course). The bleeding, however, produced no apparent effect. The noise still continued as before, at intervals, wherever the girl went, each sound producing more or less of a spasm, and the physician, with all the family, remained up during the night. At daylight the thumping ceased again. In the evening the same thing was repeated, commencing a little earlier than before; and so every evening since, continuing each night until morning, and commencing each night a little earlier than before, until yesterday, when the thumping began about twelve o'clock at noon. The circumstances were soon generally spread through the neighborhood, and have produced so much excitement that the house has been filled and surrounded from sunrise to sunset for nearly a week. Every imaginable means have been resorted to, in order to unravel the phenomenon. At one time

the girl would be removed from one apartment to another, but without effect. Wherever she was placed, at certain intervals, the thumping noise would be heard in the room. She was taken to a neighboring house. The same result followed. When carried out of doors, however, no noise is heard. Dr. Drake, who has been constant in his attendance during the whole period, occasionally aided by other scientific observers, was with us last evening for two hours, when we were politely allowed a variety of experiments with the girl, in addition to those heretofore tried, to satisfy ourselves that there is no imposition in the case, and, if possible, to discover the secret agent of the mystery. The girl was in an upper room with a part of the family when we reached the house. The noise then resembled that which would be produced by a person violently thumping the upper floor with the head of an axe five or six times in succession, jarring the house, ceasing a few minutes, and then resuming as before. We were soon introduced into the apartment and permitted to observe for ourselves. The girl appeared to be in perfect health, cheerful and free from the spasms felt at first, and entirely relieved from everything like the fear or apprehension which she manifested for some days. The invisible noise, however, continued to occur as before, though somewhat diminished in frequency, while we were in the room. In order to ascertain more satisfactorily that she did not produce it voluntarily, among other experiments we placed her on a chair on a blanket in the centre of the room, bandaged the chair with a cloth, fastening her feet on the front round, and confining her hands together on her lap. No change, however, was produced. The thumping continued as before, except that it was not quite so loud — the noise resembling that which would be produced by stamping on the floor with a heavy heel; yet she did not move a limb or muscle that we could discover. She remained in this position long enough to satisfy all in the room that the girl exercised, voluntarily, no sort of agency in producing the noise. It was observed that the noise became greater the further she was removed from any other person. We placed her in the doorway

of a closet in the room, the door being ajar to allow her to stand in the passage. In less than one minute the door flew open, as if violently struck with a mallet, accompanied by precisely such a noise as such a thump would produce. This was repeated several times with the same effect. In short, in whatever position she was placed, whether in or out of the room, similar results, varied a little perhaps by circumstances, were produced. There is certainly no deception in the case. And now for conjecture. For ourselves we offer none; but among other conjectures, which have been suggested by Dr. D. and others, is that the phenomenon is electrical. * * * * * The noise was heard at least one hundred yards from the house."

How long these sounds continued I am not informed, but it is stated that the family became so much annoyed that they were obliged to give notice that they would receive no more company unless they were professional men introduced by their physician.

These accounts come down to us sustained by the most positive testimony, and are beyond dispute, to say nothing of the well-authenticated cases which are related by those whom we know, but who have been ashamed to let the world know what they have themselves experienced, and so keep their secret until others, more daring, shall lay before the world similar facts, when they will step forward and add their mite to the testimony.

There must certainly exist some *natural* cause, by which these sounds are made. By natural causes I do not mean that the cause is positively known to man at the present time, or that it is produced by machinery or collusion of any kind. *I know this is not the case.* But, as nothing can exist without a cause, and as the laws of nature are the most perfect of anything we can have any conception of; and as nothing of which man or any other production of these laws can conceive or recognize can be superior or above these laws (unless it be the source from whence they originated), I speak of the laws which govern this communication between inferior and superior intelligences as perfectly

NATURAL. I ask to be pointed to nothing superior to this in the investigation of the subject.

Neither would I make the separation that some do between spirit and matter. I am convinced that no such separation exists. It is at the same time to assert that it is *something* and *nothing*. If it is not matter, it is nothing. It is the height of absurdity to assert that there is an absolute existence, and yet it is not matter, — it is nothing, yet to be talked of, to, and about. That there exists matter too refined, subtile and sublimated, for our vision in a normal state to observe, is undoubted; and I have as little doubt of there being intelligent beings who, beyond our vision, still have an influence upon us, and are entirely capable of communicating with us through sounds, impressions and various other means. It is no more proof that they are not thus about us, because not seen, than that electricity, or the numerous animalculæ which we are constantly eating, drinking and breathing, although unseen, do not exist for the same reason. It may not be unprofitable to go into the examination of the connection between spirits and other matter, in this connection, in order that the reader's mind may be prepared for the development of facts which may look still more strange than those already related.

In regard to the rapping sounds, and other phenomena and their existence, there is no longer room for doubt. The tens of thousands of individuals who have heard them, and who have been in full possession of their senses, and not easily to be deceived, are abundant testimony on this point.

The connection between spirit and other matter, or between the visible and invisible world of human beings, is at present little understood. I am of the opinion that the connection is far more intimate than is generally believed. Of this fact there is the most positive and convincing proof. Many may be so averse to receiving new truths, which set aside all their preconceived opinions, as to disregard the positive evidence of their senses. But most men are not willing to admit that they are so easily imposed upon, as many think, or pretend to think, they are themselves.

If men would acquaint themselves with the process of the formation of the earth; if they would observe how it gradually grew, through countless ages, to its present form and state of perfection; if they would reflect that, instead of its always having been what it now is in size, shape and substance, it was once a liquid mass, which gradually, by the action of natural causes, became solid in its essential parts and foundations; that at one time vegetable life could not be found "on the face of the earth;" if they would remember that at first the mineral productions were of the grossest kind, which have been constantly changing and refining; that in the course of ages vegetable productions of the rankest kind appeared, and that, as the earth perfected, the more refined were the productions, and finally animal life appeared; that these animals, like the vegetable productions, were of the most imperfect nature; and at last, after ages had rolled away, the earth was prepared for the production of man, the superior of all these as an intelligent, thinking being; that he at first was a mere infant to what after ages developed him to be; that he is still progressing onward and upward in knowledge and refinement, and exhibits a perfection of organization which is beyond the power of annihilation; they would begin to form some idea of the great chain of progression which not only applies to things visible, but with equal force throughout the universe and to all stages of existence.

Would it be reasonable to stop short at the decay of man's visible organization, and deny the existence of any remaining intelligence that pertained to him, merely because we cannot *see* that existence? No man will assert this to be a valid reason. In fact, from various proofs, or from the authority of others, the idea of a future existence has become almost universal; and, whether these ideas have been philosophically formed or not, it would be useless in this place for us to inquire.

It is said, and we think never disputed by men of science, that all space is filled with solid, fluid and imponderable substances, and that all objects, or any two, in space, let them be far off or near to each other, are necessarily connected by the various forms

or substances existing in the space which separates them. It is a matter, which has long been settled by men of philosophy and education, that all particles of matter, wherever situated, act upon and influence each other; that each has an influence upon the other; and that none exist or act without an absolute dependence upon the whole; in a word, there is no such thing as absolute individual independence in the universe.

The highest form of organization of which we have any conception, and which probably *is the highest*, is that which manifests *intelligence*. The forms of intelligence, or their manifestations, are various, defined by some as *instinct* and *reason*. It is useless to undertake the task of tracing them, through their different gradations, up to the highest developments of reason. There is in this, as in tracing the various forms of vegetable and animal life, a connection so intimate and perfect, that it is impossible to tell where the lower ends and the higher begins, so closely interwoven are the links of the great chain of which each is a part.

May we not, then, safely calculate that man continues to progress beyond his present state of existence, and that the change which takes place at what is called death is not so vast and so sudden as the world has generally supposed? — and that the day is not far distant when the whole phenomena recorded in the following pages shall be looked upon as only the incidents in the development of a free and continued intercourse between the visible and invisible worlds?

CHAPTER II.

FIRST DISTURBANCES AT HYDESVILLE — EVENTS PREVIOUS TO THE SOUNDS BEING HEARD WITH THE FOX FAMILY — TESTIMONY OF WITNESSES — FIRST MEDIUMS, ETC. ETC.

The house at which the manifestations first commenced, that have turned the eyes of the people of this generation to a more minute and careful investigation of spiritual phenomena than has characterized any preceding age, stands among a cluster of houses known by the name of Hydesville, in the town of Arcadia, county of Wayne and state of New York. It is a small framed building, one and a half stories high, and, at the time of the occurrences which have made it a matter of interest and curiosity to so many thousands, bore unmistakable evidences of age; and had been the humble shelter of many a family previous to that of Mr. Fox.

It has generally been supposed, and so published, in most of the accounts of the commencement of these phenomena, that the sounds were first heard when the house was occupied by a Mr. Weekman. This seems to be an error, as there are, at least, two witnesses, whose testimony is recorded in a small pamphlet, published by E. E. Lewis, Esq., at Canandaigua, N. Y., in 1848, who testify to the sounds being heard by a family who occupied the same house in 1844. These witnesses are Mrs. Ann Pulver and Miss Lucretia Pulver. The former testifies as follows:

"I was acquainted with Mr. and Mrs. —— (who occupied the house in 1844). I used to call on them frequently. My warping bars were in their chamber, and I used to go there to do my work. One morning when I went there Mrs. —— told me that

she felt very bad; that she had not slept much if any the night before. When I asked her what the matter was, she said she did n't know but what it was the fidgets; but she thought she heard somebody walking about from one room to another, and that she had Mr. —— get up and fasten down all the windows. She said she felt more safe after that. I asked her what she thought it was. She said it *might* be rats. I heard her speak about hearing noises after that which she could not account for."

Miss Lucretia Pulver, in her testimony, says: "I lived in this house all one winter, in the family of Mr. ——. I worked for them part of the time, and part of the time I boarded and went to school. I lived there about three months. During the latter part of the time that I was there I heard this knocking frequently, in the bedroom, under the foot of the bed. I heard it a number of nights, as I slept in the bedroom all the time that I staid there. One night I thought I heard a man walking in the buttery. This buttery is near the bedroom, with a stairway between. Miss Aurelia Lozey staid with me on that night; she also heard the noise, and we were both much frightened, and got up, and fastened down the windows and fastened the door. It sounded as if a person walked through the buttery, down cellar, and part way across the cellar bottom, and there the noise would cease. There was no one else in the house at this time, except my little brother, who was asleep in the same room with us. This was about twelve o'clock, I should think. We did not go to bed until after eleven, and had not been asleep when we heard the noise. Mr. and Mrs. —— had gone to Loch Berlin, to be gone until the next day."

It seems, then, that these noises had been common to the house for some years before the Fox family occupied it. In the year 1847, it was occupied by Mr. Michael Weekman. Mr. Weekman and his family are not to be numbered among the superstitious and credulous; at least, their neighbors never thought them so before they made their statements in regard to the occurrences at their house. As it may be of importance, hereafter, to

have all the proofs in regard to the first introduction of the modern manifestations, I will here introduce the testimony of Mr. and Mrs. Weekman. The certificates are those originally given to E. E. Lewis, Esq., and published as before stated.

STATEMENT OF MRS. HANNAH WEEKMAN.

"We have lived in this place about five months. I have heard about the mysterious noises that have been heard in the house now occupied by Mr. Fox. We used to live in the same house; we lived there about a year and a half, and moved from there to the house we now occupy. About a year ago, while we were living there, we heard some one, as we supposed, rapping on the outside door. I had just got into bed, but my husband had not. He went and opened it, and said that there was no one there. He came back, and was about getting into bed, when we heard the rapping on the door again. He then went to the door and opened it, and said that he could see no one, although he stepped out a little way. He then came back and got into bed. He was quite angry; he thought 't was some of the neighboring boys trying to disturb us, and said that 'they might knock away, but they would not fool him,' or something of that kind. The knocking was heard again; and after a while he got up, and went to the door and went out. I told him not to go out doors, for perhaps somebody wanted to get him out and hurt him. He came back, and said he could see nothing. We heard a good deal of noise during the night; we could hardly tell where it was: it sounded, sometimes, as if some one was walking in the cellar. But the house was old, and we thought it might be the rattling of loose boards, or something of that kind.

"A few nights afterwards, one of our little girls, who slept in the bedroom where the noises are now heard, woke us all up by screaming very loud. My husband and I, and our hired girl, got up immediately to see what was the matter. She sat up in bed, crying and screaming, and it was some time before we could find out what the matter was. She said that something had been

moving about, over her head and face — that it was cold, and she did not know what it was. She said that she felt it all over her, but she was most alarmed at feeling it on her face. She was very much frightened. This was between twelve and one o'clock at night. She got up and got into bed with us, and it was a long time before she could go to sleep. It was several days before we could get her to sleep in that room again. She was eight years old at that time.

"Nothing else happened to me during the time that we lived there; but my husband told me that one night he heard some one call him by name, somewhere in the house, — he did not know where, — but could never find out where or what it was. I was not at home that night. I was sitting up with a sick person. We did not think the house was haunted at that time.

"I do not believe in *spooks*, or anything of that kind; but I hardly know what to say about it now; so many have heard the noises that it seemed as if something was the matter.

"(Signed,) HANNAH WEEKMAN.

"Tuesday, April 11, 1848."

STATEMENT OF MICHAEL WEEKMAN.

"I am the husband of Hannah Weekman. We used to live in the house now occupied by Mr. Fox, in which they say strange noises are heard. We lived there about a year and a half. One evening, about bed-time, I heard the rapping. I supposed it was some one knocking at the door, who wanted to come in. I did not bid him 'come in' as I usually do, but went to the door. I did not find any one there; but went back, and just as I was getting into bed, I heard the rapping again, and opened the door quick, but could see no one there. I stepped out a step or two, but could see no one about there. I then went back and got into bed. I thought some one was making game of me. After a few minutes I heard the knocking again, and after waiting a few minutes, and still hearing it, I got up and went to the door. This time I went clear out and looked around the house, but could

find no one. I then stepped back and shut the door, and held on to the latch, thinking that if there was any one there I would catch them at it. In a minute or two I heard the rapping again. My hand was on the door, and the knocking appeared to be on the door. I could feel it jar with the raps. I instantly opened the door, and sprang out; but there was no one in sight. I then went round the house again, but could find no one, as before. My wife told me I had better not go out of doors, as it might be some one that wanted to hurt me. I did not know what to think of it, it seemed so strange and unaccountable." (He here relates the case of the little girl being frightened, as given above.)

"One night after this, about midnight, I was awake, and heard my name called. It sounded as if it was on the south side of the room. I sat up in bed and listened, but did not hear it again. I did not get out of bed, but waited to see if it would be repeated. My wife was not at home that night. I told her of it afterwards, and she said she guessed I had been dreaming. My wife used to be frightened quite often by hearing strange noises in and about the house.

"I have heard so much from men in whom I place confidence about these noises that are now heard, that, taken in connection with what I heard, I cannot account for it, unless it is a supernatural appearance. I am willing to make affidavit to the above facts, if necessary. (Signed,) MICHAEL WEEKMAN.

"11th April, 1848."

Mrs. Jane C. Lape testified as follows: "I am the wife of Henry Lape, and am nineteen years of age. I lived with Mr. Weekman's folks, about a year and a half ago, when he occupied the house where Mr. Fox now lives. I staid there until the spring of 1847. One day, about two o'clock, P. M., while I was doing my work in the kitchen, I saw a man in the bedroom adjoining the kitchen. The bedroom door was open and I saw the man distinctly. I was much frightened. I had been in the kitchen some time, at work, and knew no one had gone into that

room. There was only one door to the bedroom joining the kitchen. The man stood facing me when I saw him. He did not speak, nor did I hear any noise at the time like a person walking or moving about the room. He had on gray pants, black frock-coat, and black cap. He was about middling size, I should think. I knew of no person in that vicinity who wore a similar dress. Mrs. Weekman was in another part of the house at the time. I was very much frightened, and left the room, and when I returned with Mrs. Weekman there was no one there. She thought it was some one who had been trying to frighten me; but we were never able to ascertain who or what it was. I have always thought, and still do think, that it was a supernatural appearance. I never had been a believer in such things until I saw this. I am willing to testify to the above statement.

"(Signed,) JANE C. LAPE."

We hear nothing more of Mr. Weekman being disturbed by the rapping or other manifestations, or there being anything of the kind, with that exception, until after the house was occupied by the family of Mr. John D. Fox. It was reserved to that family to be the instruments of communicating to the world, or to this part of it, this most singular affair. They were the ones who first, as if by accident, found out that there was an intelligence manifested even in this rapping, which at first appeared nothing more than an annoying and unaccountable noise.

The family of Mr. Fox were well known in the neighborhood where they resided. Mr. and Mrs. Fox were connected with the Methodist Episcopal church, of which they had for many years been exemplary members, and had sustained a character unimpeachable for truth and veracity. No one who knew them had the least suspicion of their honesty or truthfulness. At the time these occurrences first took place in the family there were living with the parents three daughters, the youngest about twelve years of age.

There are, probably, few families in which such an occurrence

could have taken place, where it would have created a greater degree of surprise and fear than in this one. They were entirely unacquainted with the history of any similar occurrence in the world; and, brought up in the common routine of religious belief, they were, as, in fact, most of the world really was, and still is, entirely unprepared for such a development of the power of spirits to make themselves known to us by sounds, or other tangible means.

The following statements, condensed from the pamphlet before alluded to, will give the account of the first disturbances at the house of Mr. Fox, in their own language.

STATEMENT OF MRS. MARGARET FOX.

"I am the wife of John D. Fox. We moved into this house on the 11th of December, 1847, and have resided here ever since. We first heard this noise about a fortnight ago. It sounded like some one knocking in the east bedroom, on the floor. Sometimes it sounded as if a chair moved on the floor; we could hardly tell where it was. This was in the evening, just after we had gone to bed. The whole family slept in the room together, and all heard the noise. There were four of our family, and sometimes five. The first night we heard the rapping we all got up, lit a candle, and searched all over the house. The noise continued while we were hunting, and was heard near the same place all the time. It was not very loud, yet it produced a jar of the bedsteads and chairs, that could be felt by placing our hands on the chairs, or while we were in bed. It was a feeling of tremulous motion, more than a sudden jar. It seemed if we could hear it jar while we were standing on the floor. It continued this night until we went to sleep. I did not go to sleep until nearly twelve o'clock. The noise continued to be heard every night. On Friday night, March 31st, it was heard as usual, and we then, for the first time, called in the neighbors. Up to this time we had never heard it in the daytime, or, at least, we did not notice it at all during the day.

"On Friday night we concluded to go to bed early, and not let it disturb us; if it came we thought we would not mind it, but try to get a good night's rest. My husband was here on all these occasions, heard the noise, and helped search. It was very early when we went to bed this night; hardly dark. We went to bed early, because we had been broken so much of our rest that I was almost sick.

"My husband had gone to bed when we first heard the noise this evening. I had just laid down when it commenced, as usual. I knew it from all other noises I had ever heard in the house. The girls, who slept in the other bed in the room, heard the noise, and tried to make a similar noise by snapping their fingers. The youngest girl is about twelve years old. She is the one who made her hand go. As fast as she made the noises with her hands or fingers, the sounds followed up in the room. It did not sound different at that time; but it made the same number of raps the girl did. When she stopped the sounds would stop for a short time. The other girl, who is in her fifteenth year, then spoke, in sport, and said, 'Now do just as I do. Count one, two, three, four,' etc., at the same time striking one hand in the other. The blows which she made were repeated, as before. It appeared to answer her by repeating every blow she made. She only did so once. She then began to be startled, and I said to the noise 'Count ten,' and it made ten strokes or noises. Then I asked the ages of my different children successively, and it gave the number of raps corresponding to the ages of each of my children.

"I then asked if it was a human being making the noise, and, if so, to manifest it by the same noise. There was no noise. I then asked if it was a spirit?—if it was, to manifest it by two sounds. I heard two sounds as soon as the words were spoken. I then asked if it was an injured spirit, and, if so, to give me the sound; and I heard the rapping distinctly. I then asked if it was injured in this house, and the sounds were immediately made, distinctly;—if the person was living that injured it, and got the same answer. I then ascertained, by the same method, that its

remains were buried under the dwelling, and how old it was. When I asked how many years old it was it rapped thirty-one times; that it was a male; that it had left a family of five children; that it had two sons and three daughters, all living. I asked if it left a wife, and it rapped; — if its wife was then living, and there was no rapping; — if she was dead, and the rapping was distinctly heard; — how long she had been dead, and it rapped twice.

"About this time I asked, 'Will the noise continue if I call in some of the neighbors, that they may hear it too?' It answered, as usual, by rapping. My husband went and called Mrs. Redfield, our next door neighbor. She is a very candid woman. The girls were then sitting up in bed, somewhat terrified, and clinging to each other. I was as calm, I think, as I am now. Mrs. Redfield came immediately. This was about half-past seven o'clock. She came in thinking to joke and laugh at the children; but when she came she saw that we were all amazed like, and that there was something in it. I then asked a few questions, and they were answered as before; and she was satisfied that there was something strange about it. It told her age exactly. She would then call her husband, and he came, and the same questions were asked over again, and the answers were the same as before. It was then asked how long it had been injured, and the sound was repeated four times, at regular intervals, and then, after a short pause, once more; the same being repeated every time the same question was asked.

"Then Mr. Redfield called in Mr. Duesler and wife, and several others. A great many questions were asked over, and the same answers given as before. Mr. Duesler then called in Mr. and Mrs. Hyde; they came, and also Mr. and Mrs. Jewell. Mr. Duesler asked many questions, and got the answers. I then named over all the neighbors I could think of, and asked if any of them had injured it, and got no answer. Then Mr. Duesler asked it some questions, the same as I had, and got the same answers. He asked if it was murdered, and it answered in the usual way; — if

the murderer could be brought to justice, and there was no sound; and then if he could be punished by law, and there was no rapping. He then asked, 'If this murderer cannot be punished by law, manifest it by the noise?' and the noise was repeated. In the same way Mr. Duesler ascertained that it was murdered in the bedroom about five years ago, and that the murder was committed by Mr. ———, on one Tuesday night, at twelve o'clock; that it was murdered by having its throat cut with a butcher knife; that the body did not remain in the room next day, but was taken down cellar, and that it was not buried until the next night; that it was not taken down through an outside door, but through the buttery, down the stairway; that it was buried ten feet below the surface of the ground. It was then asked if money was the object of the murderer; and the rapping commenced. How much money was obtained? Was it one hundred dollars? two hundred? three hundred? four hundred? No noise. Five hundred? The usual rapping was heard. We were all in the bedroom at the time.

"Many called in that night, who were out fishing in the creek, and they all heard the same noise. The same questions were frequently repeated as others came in, and the same answers were obtained. Some of them staid here all night. I and my family all left the house but my husband. I went to Mrs. Redfield's and staid all night; my children staid at some of the other neighbors. My husband and Mr. Redfield staid in the house all night.

"On the next day the house was filled to overflowing all day. This was on Saturday. There was no sound heard during the day; but in the evening the sound commenced again. Some said that there were three hundred people present at this time. They appointed a committee, and many questions were asked. I did not know much what was done that night, only by hearsay, as I went to Mr. Duesler's to stay all night.

"On Sunday morning, the second of April, the noise commenced again, and was heard throughout the day by all who came there. On Saturday night they commenced digging the cellar, and dug until they came to water, and then gave it up. The

noise was not heard on Sunday evening, nor during the night. Stephen B. Smith and wife, and David S. Fox and wife, slept in the room this night. I have heard nothing since that time until yesterday. In the forenoon of yesterday there were several questions answered in the usual way by rapping. I have heard the noise several times to-day.

"I am not a believer in haunted houses or supernatural appearances. I am very sorry there has been so much excitement about it. It has been a great deal of trouble to us. It was our misfortune to live here at this time; but I am willing and anxious that the truth should be known, and that a true statement should be made. I cannot account for these noises; all that I know is, that they have been heard repeatedly, as I have stated. I have heard this rapping again this (Tuesday) morning, April 4th. My children also heard it.

"I certify that the above statement has been read to me, and that the same is true; and I am willing to make oath to it if necessary. (Signed,) MARGARET FOX.

"April 11th, 1848."

Mr. John D. Fox gives a certificate corroborating his wife's statement in every particular, and says: "I do not know in what way to account for these noises, as being caused by natural means. We have searched in every nook and corner in and about the house, at different times, to ascertain, if possible, whether anything or anybody was secreted there that could make the noise; and have never been able to find anything that explained the mystery. It has caused us a great deal of trouble and anxiety. Hundreds have visited the house, so that it is impossible to attend to our daily occupations; and I hope, whether it be natural or supernatural, the means will be found out soon."

STATEMENT OF WILLIAM DUESLER.

"I live in this place. I moved from Cayuga county here last October. I live within a few rods of the house in which these noises have been heard. The first I heard anything about them

was one week ago last Friday evening (31st day of March). Mrs. Redfield came over to my house to get my wife to go over to Mr. Fox's. Mrs. Redfield appeared to be very much agitated. My wife wanted I should go with them, and I accordingly went. When she told us what she wanted us to go over there for, I laughed at her, and ridiculed the idea that there was anything mysterious in it. I told her it was all nonsense, and that it could easily be accounted for. This was about nine o'clock in the evening. There were some twelve or fourteen persons there when I got there. Some were so frightened that they did not want to go into the room. I went into the room and sat down on the bed. Mr. Fox asked questions, and I heard the rapping, which they had spoken of, distinctly. I felt the bedstead jar when the sound was produced.

"Mrs. Fox then asked if it would answer my questions if I asked any, and if so, rap. It then rapped three times. I then asked if it was an injured spirit, and it rapped. I asked if it had come to hurt any one who was present, and it did not rap. I then reversed this question, and it rapped. I asked if I or my father had injured it (as we had formerly lived in the house); there was no noise. Upon asking the negative of these questions, the rapping was heard. I then asked if Mr. —— (naming a person who had formerly lived in the house) had injured it, and if so, to manifest it by rapping; and it made three knocks louder than common, and at the same time the bedstead jarred more than it had done before. I then inquired if it was murdered for money, and the knocking was heard. I then requested it to rap when I mentioned the sum of money for which it was murdered. I then asked if it was one hundred, two, three, or four, and when I came to five hundred the rapping was heard. All in the room said they heard it distinctly. I then asked the question if it was five hundred dollars, and the rapping was heard.

"After this, I went over and got Artemas W. Hyde to come over. He came over. I then asked over nearly the same questions as before, and got the same answers. Mr. Redfield went

after David Jewell and wife, and Mrs. Hyde also came. After they came in, I asked the same questions over again, and got the same answers.

"Then I asked the question how it was murdered. I asked if it was murdered by being struck on the head, and there was no rap. I then reversed the question, and the rapping was heard. Then I asked if it was stabbed in the side, and there was no answer; upon asking the negative of this, the rapping was heard. It usually rapped three times in answer to my questions. I then asked if it had its throat cut, and it rapped as usual. Then, if it was with a butcher-knife, and the rapping was heard. In the same way it was ascertained that it was asleep at the time, but was awakened when the knife entered the throat; that it struggled and made some resistance and noise. Then I asked if there was any one in the house at the time but him, and it did not rap; then, if they two were alone, and the rapping was heard. I then asked if Lucretia Pulver worked there at the time, and it answered by rapping; if she and Mrs. —— were gone away that night, and the rapping was renewed.

"There was rapping heard only when we asked questions. I asked if any one in Hydesville knew of the murder, except ——, and it rapped. Then I asked about a number of persons, if they knew it, and there was no rap until I came to Mrs. ——, and then the rapping was heard; then, if any one but —— and wife knew it, and I got no rap; then, if they were all that knew of the murder, and I got the rap. I asked if the body was put in the cellar, and it rapped. I then asked if it was buried in the different parts of the cellar, and to all my questions there was no rapping until I asked if it was near the centre, and the rapping was heard.

"Charles Redfield then went down cellar with a candle. I told him to place himself in different parts of the cellar; and, as he did so, I asked the question, if the person was over the place where it was buried, and I got no answer until he got over a certain place in the cellar, when it rapped. He then stepped one

side, and when I asked the question, there was no noise. This was repeated several times; and we found that, whenever he stood over this one place, the rapping was heard, and whenever he moved away from that place there was no answer to my questions. Mr. Redfield said he could hear the noise himself. I then asked which way it was carried down cellar; if round through the outside door, and there was no rapping; then, if it was down through the buttery, by the inside stairway, and the rapping was heard. I then asked it to rap my age — the number of years of my age. It rapped thirty times. This is my age, and I do not think any one about here knew my age except myself and family. I then told it to rap my wife's age, and it rapped thirty times, which is her exact age; several of us counted it at the time. I then asked it to rap A. W. Hyde's age, and it rapped thirty-two, which he says is his age; he was there at the time, and counted it with the rest of us. Then Mrs. A. W. Hyde's age, and it rapped thirty-one, which she said was her age; she was also there at the time. I then continued to ask it to rap the age of different persons (naming them) in the room, and it did so correctly, as they all said.

"I then asked the number of children in the different families in the neighborhood, and it told them correctly in the usual way by rapping. Also the number of deaths that had taken place in the families, and it told correctly. I then asked it to rap its own age, and it rapped thirty-one times distinctly. I then asked it if it left a family, and it rapped. I asked it to rap the number of children it left, and it rapped five times; then the number of girls, and it rapped three; then the number of boys, and it rapped twice. Before this, I had asked if it was a man, and it answered by rapping it was; if it was a pedler, and it rapped.

"I then asked in regard to the time it was murdered, and in the usual way, by asking the different days of the week, and the different hours of the day; that it was murdered on a Tuesday night, about twelve o'clock. The rapping was heard only when this particular time was mentioned. When it was asked if it was

murdered on a Wednesday, or Thursday, or Friday night, &c., there was no rapping. I asked if it carried any trunk, and it rapped that it did. Then how many, and it rapped once. In the same way we ascertained that it had goods in the trunk, and that —— —— took them when he murdered him; and that he had a pack of goods besides.

"I asked if its wife was living, and it did not rap; if she was dead, and it rapped. I then asked it to rap the number of years the wife had been dead, and it rapped twice. In the same way I ascertained that its children were now living, — that they lived in this state; and, after asking if in such and such county (naming over the different counties), at last, when I asked if they lived in Orleans county, the rapping was heard, and at no other time. This was tried over several times, and the result was always the same. I then tried to ascertain the first letters of its name by calling over the different letters of the alphabet. I commenced with A, and asked if that was the initial of its first name; there was no rapping. When I came to C, the rapping was heard, and at no other letter in the alphabet. I then asked, in the same way, in regard to the initials of its surname; and when I asked if it was R, the rapping commenced. We then tried all the other letters, but could get no answer by the usual rapping. I then asked if we could find out the whole name by reading over all the letters of the alphabet, and there was no rapping. I then reversed the question, and the rapping was heard. * * * * There were a good many more questions asked on that night, by myself and others, which I do not now remember. They were all answered readily in the same way. I stayed in the house until about twelve o'clock, and then came home. Mr. Redfield and Mr. Fox stayed in the house that night.

"Saturday night I went over again, about seven o'clock. The house was full of people when I got there. They said it had been rapping some time. I went into the room. It was rapping in answer to questions when I went in. I went to asking questions, and asked over some of the same ones that I did the night before,

and it answered me the same as it did then. I also asked different questions, and it answered them. Some of those in the room wanted me to go out, and let some one else ask the questions. I did so, and came home. There were as many as three hundred people in and around the house at this time, I should think. Hiram Soverhill, Esq., and Volney Brown, asked it questions while I was there, and it rapped in answer to them.

"I went over again on Sunday, between one and two o'clock, P.M. I went into the cellar with several others, and had them all leave the house over our heads; and then I asked if there had been a man buried in the cellar, to manifest it by rapping, or any other noise or sign. The moment I asked the question, there was a sound like the falling of a stick, about a foot long and half an inch through, on the floor in the bedroom over our heads. It did not seem to bound at all; there was but one sound. I then told Stephen Smith to go right up and examine the room, and see if he could discover the cause of the noise. He came back, and said he could discover nothing, — that there was no one in the room or in that part of the house. I then asked two more questions, and it rapped in the usual way. We all went up stairs and made a thorough search, but could find nothing.

"I then got a knife and fork, and tried to see if I could make the same noise by dropping them; but I could not. This was all I heard on Sunday. There is only one floor, or partition, or thickness, between the bedroom and the cellar; no place where anything could be secreted to make the noise. When this noise was heard in the bedroom, I could hear a slight tremulous motion or jar.

"There was some digging in the cellar on Saturday night. They dug until they came to water, and then gave it up. The question had been previously asked whether it was right that they should dig on that night, and there was no rapping. Then, whether it was wrong, and the rapping was heard. Whether they should dig on Sunday; no rapping. On Monday; rapping commenced again.

However, some insisted on digging at this time, and dug accordingly; but without success.

"On Monday night, I heard this noise again, and asked the same questions I did before, and got the same answers. This is the last time I have heard any rapping. I can in no way account for this singular noise which I and others have heard. It is a mystery to me which I am wholly unable to solve. I am willing to testify under oath that I did not make the noises or rapping which I and others heard; that I do not know of any person who did or could have made them; that I have spent considerable time, since then, in order to satisfy myself as to the cause of it, but cannot account for it on any other ground than that it is supernatural. I lived in the same house about seven years ago, and at that time never heard any noises of the kind in and about the premises. I have understood from Johnson and others, who have lived there before —— —— moved there, that there were no such sounds heard there while they occupied the house. I never believed in haunted houses, or heard or saw anything but what I could account for before; but this I cannot account for,

"(Signed,) Wm. Duesler.

"April 19, 1848."

Mr. Walter Scotten, in his testimony, which speaks of his acquaintance with the Fox family, and commends them for honesty and integrity, corroborates the above statements, and adds: "The noise appeared, when we were in the cellar, to come from the ground. Some thought it was on one side, and some on the other. We could hardly tell what direction it came from. It did not sound like any noise that could be made by rapping or striking, either on the floor, or on the ground. I have since tried to make the same noise in various ways, but have never succeeded in imitating it. Stephen Smith, my wife, Mrs. Fox, Mrs. Losey, Mr. Wm. D. Storer and two girls, were down in the cellar with me at the time of which I have spoken. I was in the house but about half an hour, and then came right home. I have never heard

noises there any other time than this. There had been digging in the cellar at the time I was there. They had dug about two feet and a half, I should think. There was a good deal of water in the hole, which, they said, had prevented them from digging any more."

Mrs. Elizabeth Jewel, in her testimony, says: "I never saw anything before which I could not account for in some way or other. This I am wholly at a loss to account for, unless it be a supernatural appearance. I have been acquainted with Mr. Fox and family some time, and cheerfully certify that I never saw anything in their conduct, or heard anything about them, that would lead me to suppose that they would be guilty of carrying on a trickery in order to deceive the public; on the contrary, I have always looked upon them as honest, upright people, and good neighbors."

Lorren Tenney says: — "I have heard Mr. Duesler's statement about what took place on that evening (31st of March), and the same is correct, so far as I know. I have no doubt but what Mr. Fox and family are honest, and will tell the truth about this matter. It makes a great deal of trouble for Mr. Fox and his family. They are thronged with visitors, and broken of their rest. The house has been searched from top to bottom, and nothing found that could make the noise. I did not go there believing that there was anything in it; but supposed it was some trickery or deception."

Mr. James Bridges, who was there on the same night, says: — "I cannot in any way imagine how these noises can be made by any human means. If it had been heard but on one or two occasions, I should not think it such a mystery, but should be satisfied that some one was cutting up a caper, in order to alarm Mr. Fox's people. But now I think that is impossible."

Mr. David S. Fox gives a statement confirming the others heretofore recorded, and says, furthermore, that "There is no place about the house in which any person could be secreted so as to produce these sounds. There is only one floor between this bedroom and the cellar. * * * I was here (at the house) on

Monday, the 3rd of April, and we commenced digging again in the cellar, and bailing out the water; but we found it impossible to make much headway. On Tuesday evening they began digging again. I got a pump, and we took up the floor, and put it into the hole, and began to pump and bail out the water at the same time. We could not lower the water much, and had to give it up. The water is now in the hole, although it is lowering gradually."

Such is the testimony — unimpeachable and conclusive — of the first occurrences at Hydesville. The witnesses establish, beyond the possibility of a doubt, the presence of some unseen and intelligent agency in producing these sounds. But this was not the only kind of evidence by which the invisible presence was to be proved. As the family and their friends became more familiar with the mysterious visitants, and could converse without alarm, other manifestations began to be made, exhibiting, in a more astonishing manner, the command of the communicators over the elements, by which was created at will any sound that might be desired. Thus, the intelligence claiming to be the spirit of the murdered man would produce a sound like the death struggle, the gurgling in the throat, &c., of a man whose throat was cut; then the sound of dragging a lifeless body across the room, down the stairs, the feet striking on each step; then a sound as if shoveling dirt in the cellar, the nailing of boards, and the filling up of the hastily-made grave, — all sounding as perfectly natural as if you had stood in the grave-yard, and heard the clods descend upon the last resting-place of the body of a friend. I have myself heard the same, and it was hard, indeed, to convince one's self that it was not a reality instead of a mere representation. Another sound was produced like that of pouring a quantity of clotted blood from a pail on to the floor. This sound would come suddenly, when the family, or some portion of it, sat in a room, not thinking of the manifestations; and the first thought would be that some one had poured down a whole pailful of something, that would fall like so much blood, or, as the family expressed it, "lobbered milk."

It was some time before the spirits exhibited any preference for any one of the family, or seemed to require the presence of one more than the other, in order to produce the various sounds and movements. At length they discovered that Catharine, the youngest girl, seemed to be required in order to obtain the communications. She was then in the twelfth year of her age. This was the first discovery of mediumship in that family. Indeed, it is the first case of acknowledged mediumship for sounds, so far as I am able to discover, that the world has been made acquainted with. There have been those who were undoubted mediums, and were attended by similar demonstrations; but they have not been characterized by the intelligence that has uniformly attended this family. The exhibition of intelligence heretofore has been only in rare cases, and for a short time, to disappear and remain a wonder to the recipients of the strange visitations. But here they have remained to explain themselves, and silence forever all doubts in regard to the power of unseen intelligences to communicate with the inhabitants of this visible world.

It should be observed that the discovery of the intelligence in these sounds, or the source of them, was entirely accidental. Mrs. Fox asked the sounds to tell her the age of her children, after she had noticed the imitations of the number of sounds made by the girl's hands, and because she was confused, and did not know what else to say. They had tried all expedients to discover what the source or cause of the mystery was, but had thus far failed entirely.

No family in the country could have been more amazed at the discovery of such a visitation, than were each and all the members of this one. They were not superstitious, and had never heard that the house in which they lived had been known as a "haunted house," or that any strange occurrences had taken place there. The families who had heretofore been disturbed had carefully concealed the facts from the public and from all their neighbors. They were not, then, looking for any such manifestations. The facts in regard to the commencement of the sounds and the

first discovery of intelligence most unmistakably indicate the surprise of the family, and the entirely accidental discovery of intelligence.

The same will be noticed by reference to the manner in which the communication by alphabet was discovered. They were desirous of getting the name of the man purporting to have been murdered. After trying various expedients, David S. Fox asked if it would answer to the initial letter of the name if they would call the alphabet. This was answered in the affirmative, and the letters were accordingly given. It is important that this fact be kept in view, that the reader may not be led to suppose that the whole was a preconcerted scheme, with all the details arranged beforehand. Another fact is, that, at that time, they had no idea of getting communications by alphabet, and it was not used for a long time after. They supposed that the name was all they could get by that means.

There are many circumstances going to make up a case of circumstantial proof that there was, at some time, a murder committed in the house. To this effect, so far as spiritual manifestations are concerned, is the testimony of Miss and Mrs. Pulver. There is, aside from this, enough to establish very reasonable suspicions in regard to the transactions of a certain family who formerly occupied the house.

In addition to this, it is a fact not generally known, that, in the summer of 1848, Henry Bush and Lyman Granger, of Rochester, and David S. Fox, and others, of Arcadia, recommenced digging in the cellar of the house; and, after digging about five feet, came to a plank, through which they bored with an auger, which, on boring through (the auger being loose in the handle), fell through, out of sight. On digging further they found several human teeth, and a few bones, and some hair, which evidently came from a human head, although no connected bones or skull were found. They also found a quantity of charcoal at the same depth. This shows, most incontestably, that the ground, at some time, had been disturbed, and these things deposited. This, taken with the

evidence of the family, on whom suspicion fell, having sundry articles, in a very mysterious way, about the time the murder was said to have been committed, is enough, at least, to give a shade of circumstantial evidence in favor of the truth of the allegation of the spirit in regard to the murder.

Another curious feature in the early manifestations should not be lost sight of. All the family, except Mr. Fox (who never was a medium), left the house, as appears by the testimony, during one night, and still the sounds were heard as usual. In their absence questions were answered as freely as when they were all present. It was not until after the confusion and excitement had subsided that the spirits seemed to select the two youngest girls, Catharine and Margaretta, and from that time they have continued "mediums;" and, so far as we are acquainted, they, with their sister, Mrs. Brown, formerly Mrs. Fish (who has since become a medium), have been the best mediums for sounds yet known to the public. I do not wish to be understood that they are superior in reliability to many others; but, for a promiscuous company, the sounds are louder and more certain with them than any mediums I have ever known. There are several families, in the neighborhood of the old house at Hydesville, that now have occasional demonstrations; and the family, whoever it may be, that occupies the house formerly occupied by the Fox family, is sure to be disturbed by occasional manifestations.

Soon after the discovery that Kate was the medium, the family having become weary of the annoyance they had been subject to, sent her to Rochester, to reside with her sister, Mrs. Fish; thinking that by changing the locality she would avoid the disagreeable annoyance herself, and also prevent the demonstrations to the family. In this, however, they were mistaken; for, as soon as Kate left the family, the sounds commenced in the presence of Margaretta, the next older sister. She was at the house of her brother, Mr. David S. Fox, who lived about three miles from Hydesville, where the sounds originally commenced. Thus, it will be seen, spirits were not to be baffled in their efforts to estab-

lish an actual and convincing mode of communication with the inhabitants of this mundane sphere.

During the six years that have elapsed since the commencement of the manifestations at Hydesville, there have been few more singular, and no more convincing, proofs of the agency of spirits, than were given to the family of Mr. Fox. Almost every variety of the phenomena that have startled the world, since that time, were known to them, long before the public were made aware of the existence of such strange occurrences. They have had all the variety of sounds mentioned above; had speaking in an audible voice, moving of furniture, touching, and writing by the spirits. Blocks of wood were thrown into the windows, when they were opened, with important directions written upon. Information was given to the family, which was of essential benefit, by writing on the floor of a room where it was known that no living, visible person had been.

Notwithstanding all this, they sought to keep it from the public. They shrank from notoriety, and from having their names connected with such a strange and unpopular affair. Their efforts were rather to get rid of the trouble than to make themselves notorious by it. But in this they did not succeed. The unseen visitors were so entirely beyond their control, that the demonstrations would be made, and sounds be heard by all who visited them. Of course, under such circumstances, it soon became known throughout the neighborhood.

As soon as this fact became established, persecutions commenced, and they were denounced by the bigoted and superstitious as impostors; or, if they could not dispute the facts, they were charged with being in league with the devil. Among other modes of persecution, the church, of which they were members, began its annoyance.

A young student of material "divinity," a mere boy, was sent to lecture Mrs. Fox, whose years, at least, entitled her to be treated with due respect. Instead of this, however, impudence and arrogance were the chief arguments of this young man. Mrs.

Fox was required to give up that over which she had no control; and, instead of fairly undertaking the investigation, to see what they might discover, they steadily refused; but persevered in their annoyance, and insisted that the family should be condemned for hearing what was thrust upon them without their knowledge, and against their express wishes. Pursued by the relentless slanders of the minister and the church, who could find no point to make a charge against them, Mr. and Mrs. Fox withdrew from the connection, as they could not cling to a body that denied all tangible evidence of spiritualism, and openly avowed its adherence to a materialism, as full of mystery and dogmatism as the most blindly enthusiastic reveries of the veriest dreamer that ever imposed his dreams upon the world as a living reality.

CHAPTER III.

FIRST MANIFESTATIONS IN ROCHESTER, N. Y. — ALARM OF THE FAMILY — OPPOSITION OF MR. CALVIN R. BROWN — VIOLENT DEMONSTRATIONS — ENTHUSIASTIC AND FANATICAL BELIEVERS — ABSURD DIRECTIONS FOLLOWED — DISAPPOINTMENT AND UNBELIEF — PROOFS AND CASES STATED — FIRST CASE OF TELEGRAPHING.

It was mentioned, in the second chapter, that the youngest daughter of Mr. Fox — Kate — was taken to Rochester to live with Mrs. Fish, in the hope that this would terminate the disturbances. Kate alleged to Mrs. Fish that she heard the sounds on board the canal packet, while they were going from Newark to Rochester; but her sister having never heard much of them, and being quite incredulous, disputed it, accounting for the sounds in some other way. But little was said on the subject, and their great anxiety was to be entirely rid of the matter.

On their arrival at Rochester they rented a new house on Prospect-street. Mrs. Fish very innocently told the landlord that she wanted a house that had never been occupied; giving him the reason, which was, that her sister and the family had been disturbed by strange occurrences. Into this house they moved in the month of April, 1848. Before all their furniture was moved into the house, Kate and another girl, being together, heard the sounds, and received answers to many questions. While they were getting sounds out of the house, Mrs. Fish sat alone inside; when, suddenly, she was aroused by that terrible sound of the pouring of a pail of coagulated blood upon the floor. It was repeated, in quick succession, three times. Frightened terribly, and hardly knowing what she did, she rushed from the room to

find the girls. She met them in the yard, and, in their turn, they were horrified at the ashy paleness of Mrs. F., and inquired the cause before she had spoken. Her answer was, "O, that dreadful sound! What is it? What is it?" After becoming more calm, they returned to the house, but did not hear anything more until after they had retired for the night. Then the demonstrations commenced with more violence than usual. The goods, which were below the room in which they slept, and not yet arranged, were moved and tumbled violently about the room, to the great alarm and discouragement of the family. Previous, however, to the moving of furniture, or any other demonstration, about twelve o'clock at night, a heavy knock was heard at the outer door. There was a high flight of steps to ascend to get to the door, and, although they were all awake, they heard no one come up. The knocking ceased, and they waited to hear it repeated, or to hear some one go down the steps. They heard neither; but soon a loud knocking commenced on the roof of the house. It came on at one end, advanced along the whole length of the roof, and finally was in the room where they slept. The sounds were loud and boisterous, and all of the family very much frightened. Calvin R. Brown, who had lived in Mr. Fox's family for many years, was with them. He had not before heard the disturbances, having been in Rochester while they were in the excitement at Hydesville. He had no faith in their being spiritual, although he knew they were not produced by the family. He was much perplexed to know what it was. Kate and Elizabeth, the latter Mrs. Fish's daughter, then about twelve years old, slept together. Soon, they cried out that they were being touched — that a cold hand was laid on them, &c. Mrs. Fish had seen but little of the strange affair, and told the girls to keep still, for she did not believe it. The repeated screams and fright of the girls, however, convinced her that something was there which prevented them from sleeping, and at the same time frightened them terribly. Finally, she took them both into bed with her, one on each side, hoping thereby to put an end to the noise; but the touching con-

tinued. Elizabeth had long been suffering from a spinal complaint, and had nearly lost the use of her limb, when these demonstrations commenced. The touches were invariably on the spot most tender and diseased. This caused her to jump and exercise herself, and finally worked an entire cure. At that time it was looked upon as very wonderful, but such cases of healing are now quite common. The night spoken of, — the first they had spent in the house, — they were not permitted to rest until three or four o'clock in the morning; and they were obliged to make all their beds on the floor, as they were constantly raised up and shook about when they were on a bedstead.

At this time Mrs. Fish was teaching music, and her only means of living was the pay from her pupils. She greatly feared that the disturbances would drive them away, either by fright or disgust at so strange and, to them, scandalous an affair. In a day or two the sounds commenced in the daytime, and so greatly were they annoyed that, for all one day at least, they went without preparing or eating a meal. In great confidence Mrs. Fish finally told Mrs. Granger, one of her neighbors, of the terrible annoyances they were subject to. Mr. Granger and his family were Methodists, and looked upon it in a miraculous light. Mrs. Fish, at times when she was so disturbed, knelt down and prayed that this affliction might pass from them. During their praying the sounds would be more loud and boisterous than ever. It was impossible to conceal the facts, and soon several of the neighbors were admitted to hear. They had meetings almost nightly; and they were characterized by praying on the part of some of the visitors, and by most boisterous demonstrations by the spirits. Books, shells and other articles, were thrown with great violence about the room; but although entirely in the dark, no shell or book that could injure would ever strike a person, while pamphlets and such articles as would do no harm would strike square in the face. These meetings were characterized by the wildest fanaticism at times, and just in proportion to the ranting of the individuals would be the violence of the manifestations. Thus, by fright

and fanaticism, were the first spiritual communications received in Rochester. Several persons, composed mostly of "Christian Perfectionists" and Methodists, concluded that it was a special message from the Lord, calling for speedy repentance. In all this wild excitement the Fox family did not join. They only prayed earnestly to be delivered from the, to them, terrible annoyance. But this was denied them. Time passed on, and the manifestations continued. Fanaticism subsided, and the spirits were less boisterous, or, rather, a less boisterous class of spirits were attracted. With the mediums, the whole phenomena became more orderly and more willing to grant their requests, in all but leaving them entirely. This they refused to do.

At an early day the family were visited by a Methodist minister, who proposed to exorcise the spirits. He said that, if the family would allow him to perform his incantations, they would hear no more of the disturbance, which he, of course, attributed to the devil. They gladly allowed him to make the attempt. He walked around the room, used certain formula supposed to be potently orthodox for the casting out of unclean spirits; but, to his astonishment, all his mummery availed nothing, and the spirits did not obey his commands. He was much disappointed at the failure of his power over unseen intelligences.

As a specimen of the credulity with which some persons received the phenomena, it may be well to relate, without giving the names, an occurrence which caused considerable excitement in Rochester and vicinity. In the month of July or August, 1848, a young man — a tobacco pedler — came into the city with his horses, put them up at the stable of a hotel, and very suddenly disappeared. He was known to have had several hundred dollars with him, and his friends and the public were satisfied that he was murdered for sake of the money. Days and weeks elapsed, and no tidings of the missing man could be obtained. The authorities offered a large reward for the discovery of the body and detection of the murderers. The canal, the mill-races and by-places were searched to no purpose. In the midst of the excitement, one of

the most enthusiastic spiritualists took up the subject, with the double hope of obtaining the reward and establishing the *infallibility* of spiritual communication. First a clairvoyant made a revelation of the murder, and where the body was deposited. It was said to be in the canal, and the place was pointed out. Of course, so positive a man as the one engaged in this hunt could get spirits enough to confirm his already settled convictions, and it was accordingly confirmed by the rappings. Then commenced the search. The canal was dragged at the places pointed out, but no body found. The oracles were again consulted, and now they were informed that the body had been removed to another place. That was searched with like results; and, *after* a fruitless search, they were informed that it was again removed. The superintendent of canal repairs gave notice that, on a certain day, the water would be drawn out of the canal from near the Genesee Valley canal junction, in that city, to the Brighton lock. Immediately on this announcement being made, it was revealed that the body had been removed to a point *below* the Brighton lock; and that the wife of the gentleman engaged in the search should go into the water, and also a little girl about twelve years old. It was said that they would be sure and find the body. The confiding man and wife, with the girl, repaired to the spot, and commenced the search in the water. The lady had a rope tied around her waist, and the husband held the other end, standing on a canal bridge. Once or twice the lady got beyond her depth, and was only saved from drowning by the precaution of having the rope around her, — which, by the way, the spirits had forbidden her to use, — and the little girl cut her foot severely by a stone or shell on the bottom of the canal. After a long trial, the search was abandoned, and the body was not found. Probably the mystery would never have been revealed to this day, had not the supposed murdered man himself made the revelation. He was anxious to retain what money he had in his possession, and being willing to be thought murdered, after leaving his team, had suddenly departed for Canada. Thus ended this credulous reliance

on the infallibility of clairvoyance and spiritual revelations. The effect was to produce an entire reaction in the minds of those most concerned in the transaction, and they repudiated the whole affair, for a year or two, as the work of Satan, although they are now believers again, having "learned wisdom from the things they have suffered," and become more cool and rational. The tried friends of spiritualism have witnessed much of this kind of "backsliding" among persons who rushed into the belief with blind enthusiasm at the commencement, and were not grounded on reasonable investigation. With very few exceptions, they have, instead of looking calmly for the causes of false and unreliable directions, repudiated the whole as some deception beyond their knowledge to explain, or as emanating from the devil.

Notwithstanding the facts were concealed from the public, it is worthy to be noted that, during the early part of the manifestations at Rochester, many demonstrations were made which looked like a disposition to create disturbance, without any other apparent object than mischief. Mr. Calvin R. Brown, before spoken of, was not, at first, particularly friendly to the spirits, and they seemed to reciprocate the feeling by constantly annoying him. The spirits would come to his bed, lift it up, shake it, seize his bed-clothes and carry them away, or whip him with them. At times he would seize the clothes, as they were going off, determined to dispute the right of possession with the spirits. He would brace himself and pull with all his might; and, when exerting himself to the utmost, the spirit would mischievously let go suddenly, and Mr. Brown, of course, would be thrown over backwards. Sometimes Mr. Brown would suddenly let go, under like circumstances, and the clothes would fly to the other side of the room. At times a sheet would come up to his bed, as if held up by a person, and then drop down.

One night the spirits came to his bed with a cane, and commenced striking tremendous blows on the wall at the head of his bed, just missing his head and face. He seized the cane, and got possession of it. Soon they came with a broom-handle, to which

was attached the worn-out stump of the broom. With this they commenced striking, as before, until he seized that also. With these two sticks he made a kind of fender for his face, by placing one end of them on his head-board and the other on his breast. Then the spirit came with a strip of lath, and commenced beating the sticks directly over his face. He finally took this stick away and kept all of them where he could keep his hand upon them. The next salutation was an old iron candle-stick, thrown violently, and just grazing his upper lip so as to break the skin. At intervals, during all the time they were whipping him with the sticks, they would spell out, "Kneel down and ask our forgiveness." He had nothing to ask such favors for, and told them he would not do it if they strung him up between the heavens and earth. They would then renew hostilities. After cutting his lip all was silent, as though they felt that they had gone too far, or made a mistake. They never told him to ask forgiveness again. After a short time they began to throw balls of carpet-rags, from a basket in the room, some dozen or more of which hit him every one on the forehead, in *precisely the same spot*. Some sixty in all were thrown. Many were the kinds of disturbance that Mr. Brown was subjected to before he became fully convinced that they were caused by spirits.

The confusion became so great that, as was anticipated, Mrs. Fish's class in music was entirely broken up, and it was impossible to attend to the ordinary business of the household with any regularity. At the table the spirits were often boisterous in the extreme. By this time several neighboring families had been made acquainted with the strange occurrences. Wearied with the continual annoyance, Mrs. Fish called on Isaac Post, an old friend of the family, to see if he could not solve the mystery. He went to her house, and, with the family, sat around the table and asked questions. Up to this time there never had been any communications by alphabet, the only mode being by asking questions and getting, generally, three raps for an affirmative, and none for a negative. Thus the question would be asked, "Are you the spirit

of a brother?"—no raps would be a negative. The question then being reversed thus, "Are you *not?*"—three raps would be given to affirm the negative. During this visit of Mr. Post's, the rapping was very loud and continuous, as if constantly anxious to make something known. After trying various expedients, it was mentioned, incidentally, by Mrs. Fish, that her brother David had a name spelled out by the alphabet, at Hydesville, but that nothing had ever been obtained by that means, since, either at Hydesville or anywhere else. Mr. Post immediately asked if they had ever tried. Mrs. Fish answered that they never had thought of trying it, and asked if they wanted her to call the alphabet as her brother had done at Hydesville. Immediately there came a shower of heavy raps, and each person was touched on the feet and legs; and the sounds died away to a light, pleasant rap; they seemed really to evince joy at the suggestion, as much as to say, "Yes, yes, that is what we want,—call it." Mrs. Fish then very slowly called the alphabet. The spirits rapped promptly, and spelled out the following message: "We are all your dear friends and relatives." Then the name of "Jacob Smith" was spelled out. This was the grandfather of Mrs. Fish. The whole family were overwhelmed with surprise at this message. It was a new and important discovery, and one which was made, as it were, by accident. It was, as they fully believed, a veritable telegraphic despatch from their departed friends, as it purported to be. The little message was copied and circulated among friends and neighbors, and a copy sent to the family at Hydesville. Notwithstanding the family had been familiar with the demonstrations there for several months, they had never received a message, or used the alphabet, since the spirit of the supposed murdered pedler had rapped to the letters of his name, nor had they, for a moment, supposed that any communication could be obtained in that way. On hearing what had happened, the family all started immediately for Rochester, to see the wonder for themselves, notwithstanding they had the manifestations constantly with them at Hydesville, without spelling messages. Such was the almost

accidental manner in which the mode of getting messages spelled out was made. It was as accidental here as at Hydesville, where it had never been used, on any occasion, except for spelling the name.

After discovering the use of the alphabet, they were almost constantly beset by the spirits to call it and communicate. Especially were they very clamorous for communications at the table. Mr. Brown was still annoyed by them, and desirous of being rid of their presence. At the table he would, at times, persuade the family to keep still and not call the alphabet. A constant and loud rapping would be heard, calling for the alphabet, growing louder the longer they delayed. When Mr. Brown asked them not to call it, the table would start from him, and he would be left with his knife and fork in his hands, but the table entirely out of his reach. He would seize it, and draw it back to its place, when it would either move away again, or tip up on one edge, so that whatever of liquid there was on the table would slop over. Such demonstrations would continue until Mr. Brown would take his plate and go to another table, and Mrs. Fish, or some of the family, would call the alphabet, when all would be quiet again. When they could communicate they were satisfied. They would often tell them that, if they would only yield to their direction, they should be protected from harm and the disarrangement of their business, and all their excitement would eventuate in good for them. On the contrary, it was stated by them that, if they were continually repulsed, they would be under the necessity of abandoning their attempts to communicate through them. Often did the whole family implore them to leave them; but they persevered in using them, and the result has shown that the promises of protection and guidance have been fulfilled to the family, even under the most discouraging circumstances.

As in everything else, practice in this mode of telegraphing suggested improvements. At one time Mrs. Fish asked if the spirits would give her a short signal which should always be understood as a call for the alphabet. Five quick successive raps were given as that signal. It was a year or two after this that

Mrs. Fish ascertained that a circle in New York city had arranged to get one rap for no, three for yes, and two for an indefinite answer, or to signify that the spirits could not answer at that time. This has greatly facilitated the mode of communicating.

During the early part of the excitement, the family were much persecuted by persons who would not investigate, but "*knew*" it must all be a humbug. They were even threatened with violence, and went out of the house in the evening with fear. The spirits gave them a signal whereby they might know when danger was near, and promised them protection. Demonstrations were often made to them in the streets, and, on their asking if there was danger, the spirits would reply, "No; we only wanted to let you know that we were with you." Hundreds and hundreds of evidences were presented to them of the fact that they were attended by unseen protectors.

Hundreds now flocked to the house to see the wonders, and the family was overrun with visitors. Often they were prevented from taking their meals from the time they ate their breakfast till after midnight. Day after day, week after week, and month after month, for two years from the commencement, did this constant calling continue without a charge of one cent for the time spent by the family; and for the first year, or more, Mrs. Fish refused absolutely to take the compensation often volunteered by strangers, and it was not until necessity compelled her that she yielded to receive even voluntary contributions.

Although the Fox family were the only ones known to the public, it is a fact worthy of note that about the time the sounds commenced with them in Rochester, they commenced in the family of Mr. Lyman Granger, a wealthy member of the Methodist church, residing in that place. As with the Fox family, so in Mr. G.'s, they at first displayed no partiality for any particular member of the family. They would rap to Mr. Granger in the field, when entirely alone, and to most of the members of the family; but finally they selected his daughter Elizabeth as a medium, and refused to manifest themselves to other members of

the family unless she was present. It was in the month of October, 1848, that the spirits, through the medium, spelled out a message to Mr. Granger, wherein it was stated that within one year from that time public meetings would be held in the city of Rochester, for the investigation of this subject, and that it would there and then be proved to be of spiritual origin. This was written on a slip of paper, and, being thrown by at the time, was forgotten. After the investigations at Rochester, Mr. Granger accidentally came across the paper, and, on looking at it, found that the investigations were held just one *month less than a year from the date.*

About this time very powerful physical manifestations commenced in the family of Deacon Hale, of Greece, a town adjoining the city of Rochester. In this case the spirits evinced a remarkable degree of physical power, such as moving heavy stoves and other articles of furniture.

The vibratory sounds were also produced in the family of Rev. A. H. Jarvis, a Methodist clergyman, residing in Rochester, soon after their commencement with the Fox family. Substantially the same phenomena were observed in the other cases. Many very beautiful communications were given, containing in themselves overwhelming testimony of spiritual power and foresight.

The following letter from that gentleman to the author will give a strong case of telegraphing, at a very early period of the modern manifestations.

"There are many facts which have come under my observation equally convincing of the intelligence and utility of the communications from these unseen agents, who, I now believe, are continually about us, and more perfectly acquainted with all our ways, and even our thoughts, than we are with each other. But the fact, in reference to my friend Pickard, is what you desire. He was at my house on Friday afternoon, April 6th, 1849. None of the Fox family were present. While at the tea-table we had free communications on different subjects. Pickard

was requested to ask questions. He desired to know who it was that would answer questions. The answer was, 'I am your mother, Mary Pickard.' Her name or the fact of her death was not known to any of us. The next Monday evening he (Pickard) was at Mr. G—'s and tarried there over night. He there received a communication, purporting to be from his mother, saying, 'Your child is dead.' He came immediately to my place, and said he should take the stage for home (Lockport, sixty miles distant). He left in the stage at 8 or 9 A. M. At 12 M. I returned to my house, my wife meeting me with a telegraph envelope. I broke the seal and read mentally, first, as follows:

'ROCHESTER, April 10, 1849.

'By telegraph from Lockport to Rev. A. H. Jarvis, No. 4 West-street. Tell Mr. Pickard — if you can find him — his child *died this morning*. Answer 'R. MALLORY.'

"I then read it to my wife, and said 'This is one of the best and most convincing evidences of the intelligence of those invisible agents;' and then I added 'God's telegraph has outdone Morse's altogether.' Yours truly,

"To E. W. CAPRON, Auburn. A. H. JARVIS."

Mr. Jarvis also related the following to a company which was convened at his house, one of whom was Prof. Jones, a gentleman who was then delivering a course of scientific lectures at Rochester. He was of the "New Church," or Swedenborgian faith: — "At one time we were getting communications from what purported to be our son, who had been dead some ten years. He requested us to sing a hymn with the title '*Advice to seek the Lord.*' I took a hymn-book, and was proceeding to look for the hymn, when the alphabet was called for, and he spelled 'Not that.' Another was taken. Still it spelled 'Not that.' We had four hymn-books in the room that we knew of, and were told that it was not in any of them. I was about going up to my library, when he spelled, 'It is in this room — get the little book with a red

cover.' After much search the book was found behind some ornaments on the mantel-piece, which was seldom used. A hymn was found with very near the title given, and we thought it must be the one; when we were again told '*Not that.*' On looking further we found a hymn with *exactly the title named*, and sang it while the sounds beat time." This is a most remarkable proof of the retention of memory in spirits after they escape from the body, and it was while this very fact was under discussion, that Mr. Jarvis related these facts.

One of the most remarkable cases of a display of foresight, on the part of the spirits, is the case of George Willets, now resident of the city of Rochester. He has furnished the following statement of the case:

"Dear Friend, E. W. Capron: It is with some reluctance that I furnish you with the following statement, — not that I am afraid to tell the truth, but that the world, as I conceive, is not ready to receive such truths yet. *Ridicule* probably will be heaped upon me; but when I consider that it is the ignorant only who use that weapon, perhaps I can afford to stand up and say, 'Let the storm come.' All who know me can say whether I have been truthful from my youth up, yea, or nay; and the strongest language that I can use, is to say that the following statement is *strictly and entirely true.*

"In the summer of 1848, I had concluded, from the best judgment that I could bring to my aid, that it was best for my family to remove somewhere among the wilds of the West. Accordingly I took a tour of observation, and finding some land in Michigan, that suited me better than any other, belonging to a gentleman living in Rochester, I stopped, on my return, in order, if possible, to negotiate for it. I staid with my friend and relative, Isaac Post, and while there he told me of certain sounds being heard in the city; and that they displayed intelligence, and purported to be made by 'spirits,' or persons invisible to us. I was really sceptical about any such things, but at his solicitation went to

examine it. The persons with whom those sounds seemed to be, I never had heard of or seen before, and my friend was careful not to tell them who I was, or where I had been. It seems that the question was asked whether there was any communication for me, and the direction from the sounds was, that three persons be magnetized, two of whom were present, and one was sent for from a neighboring family. I did not know the name of any person present; and I was also certain that no one knew me. After the three persons were put in the clairvoyant state, one of them said, 'We have got to go to Michigan.' They all agreed that they had to go there, and on my account. They did seem all to go there, and began to describe places and things which I had seen, and at length came to a piece of land which they said was the place they came to look at. They then described the land so accurately, which I had stopped in Rochester to buy, that I began to wonder who had told them. They all with one accord then said, 'But he must not go there. His father says that he had better not go.' As they said this, there came a loud sound close to my chair, and *I sat some distance from any other person.* They spoke much of my father, and what his mind was, and at each time that same sound was heard, and the jar distinctly felt close by myself. They then said 'His *mother* thinks it not best.' As they spoke this a different sound, not quite so loud, was heard still close by me. Then that my *sister* said it was not best. Another and different sound still was heard. Up to this time I had not spoken a word, but found the big drops of perspiration starting from my face. I gathered courage, and thought I would dispel that illusion directly. I said, 'As you assume to know my father, and what his mind is concerning me, *perhaps* you can tell his name.' They all seemed to look steadily for some time, then commenced and spoke slowly and deliberately these letters: 'W-I-L-L-I-A-M W-I-L-L-E-T-S.' At each letter the loud sound that I first heard was again heard and felt immediately under my feet. I never was so astonished in my life, and involuntarily said, 'What does all this mean?' The sounds then said, by the alphabet being called over, that they had better be

awakened, and the first loud sound said, 'I will talk with George, and tell him all about it.' The direction was for Mr. Post, myself and a little girl, thirteen years old, to go by ourselves. And here I wish it distinctly understood, that all which I shall relate as obtained from those sounds, was in the presence only of my friends, Mr. and Mrs. Post, myself and the little girl spoken of. As what follows all purported to be from my father, I will say that his name was William Willets, a member of the Society of Friends, widely known at Westbury, Lond Island, where he lived until near sixty years of age, and subsequently at Skeneateles, Onondaga county, where he died in 1841. The communication by sounds then went on to say, that it was my father that was present and talking with me; and three hours were consumed at the first interview. In saying to me what his counsel was, it always assumed to counsel and advise, but never to dictate. He said that it was not best for us to go to Michigan, and gave various reasons, among which were, that we should not enjoy ourselves in a new country, and that my health would not be competent for the task of clearing up new land; and that he *foresaw*, if we did go, that we should come back again, and would be less in number than when we went. I then asked what was best to do. The answer then was, 'Come to Rochester.' I replied that I knew of no business that I could do in Rochester. The sounds said, 'I will tell thee when thee comes.' I asked if I might know now. The answer was, 'No. I did not need any business until I came, and then he would tell me.' The sounds then said, that after a time it would be best for me to buy some land. I asked where. The sounds then spelled out the name of a man whom neither one present knew, and said that he owned fifty acres of land on such a street adjoining the city, and such a distance from the centre of the city; that he would sell any part. I asked the price that would be asked. The sounds were heard and counted by three of us, — one hundred and fifty times in succession, — to tell us the number of dollars per acre that would be asked. The sounds said that we had better go the next day and see if this was so, and said

that we should not see the man until ten o'clock, though we might look for him as early as we pleased.

"In the morning I looked in the Directory and there found the name spelled out to us, and went to his residence at seven o'clock, and was informed that he was gone to a distant part of the city, and would not be home until twelve o'clock. We then went to find him, and had some difficulty to do so, but after talking with him five or six minutes, looked at the time, and it *was seven minutes past ten!* This person said that he owned fifty acres on the street told us by the sounds, and that he would sell any part. When I asked him the price, he showed me a map with the price of each lot marked, and taking the number of acres, said, by the sounds, to be best to buy, and averaging the price, it was the price told us within six one-hundredths of a dollar per acre. I then went home to my family and pondered over these strange things. Many were the conflicts in my own mind, and I heard the cry from all quarters of 'humbug,' 'deception,' 'fraud;' but I could not believe that I wanted to deceive myself. Three months I thought of these things deeply, and *I could not go* to Michigan. I concluded, if it was deception, it would do the world some good to find it out. The first of December, 1848, I moved from Waterloo to Rochester. A few days after getting here, the little girl spoken of came round to our house, and said that the 'spirit' had directed her to come; for what purpose she did not know; we inquired what it was, and this was the communication: 'I told thee if thee would come to Rochester I would tell thee where thee could find employment; in four days from this time I will tell thee. In the mean time the anti-slavery folks are going to hold their fair; would it not be well for thee to help them?' No one was present at this time except my wife, the little girl and myself. The four days went by, and again, without solicitation, and without thinking the time was up, the little girl came again. The communication was, 'Apply to William Wiley, Superintendent of the Auburn and Rochester Railroad, to-morrow, at two o'clock, at his office, for a situation, and thee will have one before this week

is out.' This was Thursday. I was a stranger to Mr. Wiley, and I called on Mr. Post, and told him the direction, and asked him if the next day he would go with me. That evening he, happening to be at the depôt, inquired if Mr. Wiley was at home, and was told that he was in Boston, and, by a letter just received, would not be at home till Friday night. I was told by the sounds on Wednesday to apply on Thursday at two o'clock. Thursday, at half-past one, instead of going to the railroad office, I went round where these sounds were heard, and said, 'How is this?—I am told to apply to William Wiley, and he is in Boston.' The sounds said, '*Go to his office, — now he is there.*' I called for Mr. Post and walked immediately there, and *found Mr. Wiley in his office.* He said that he had returned sooner than he expected to when he wrote the letter. Mr. Post said that I was a relative of his, and wished employment; and Mr. Wiley replied that they were all full, with abundant applications, and could give no encouragement whatever. We walked back, thinking deeply, and I went where the sounds were heard again. I inquired, 'How is this—Mr. Wiley has no place for me?' The answer was, '*Thee will have a place on the cars, and will know it before the week is out.*'

"On Saturday night, at dark, I met Mr. Post, and he asked if I had heard anything from Mr. Wiley. I replied, 'Not a word.' At eight o'clock on that same evening Mr. Post called at my house, and said that Mr. Wiley had just been at his store, and said that he had a place for me, and wished me to call at his office on Monday morning. As Mr. Wiley did not tell what place I was to fill, I again asked the sounds what it was; and they said it was to go as baggage-master between this place and Auburn. On Sunday morning I wrote to my friend, James Truman, of Waterloo, stating that I should pass through that place on Monday following, in the capacity above stated, *before I knew from Mr. Wiley what place he wanted me to fill;* and he can probably testify to that fact. One month after I had been running on the cars, I learned that the person whose place I took had done things worthy of a dismissal, *previous* to my being directed to make ap-

plication, and which did not come to Mr. Wiley's notice till *the day on which I received the appointment.* These things have only been known to a few friends; you and the world now have them. I have many communications, penned down at the time they were received, purporting to be from my father, all of the most elevating character, citing me to goodness, purity and honesty of heart, and ever pointing to the endless progression of man. In conclusion, I may say that I have examined the matter attentively for one year and a half, and have had abundant opportunities to do so, and am prepared to say, although the sounds may cease to-day, and never be heard again, '*They have displayed a remarkable degree of intelligence, and were not made by any person visible to us.*'

GEORGE WILLETS."

Mr. Willets had other important directions, at that time, equally truthful and correct. No case in all the spiritual manifestations up to this day has been more remarkably fulfilled, and none more thoroughly fortified on all sides. It baffles all scepticism, let it turn which way it will.

On the 23d of November, 1848, the author went from Auburn, where he then resided, to Rochester. He had previously heard of the "mysterious rapping," and concluded it to be a trick which would soon be found out and exposed, and made up his mind to attempt its solution, whenever an opportunity should offer; like many others, supposing that he had shrewdness enough to detect the trick, if allowed an opportunity. The following is an extract from his memorandum made at the time, or soon after: —

"A friend of mine, John Kedzie, of Rochester, whom I had long known as a sceptic in regard to any *such* wonders, invited me to go with him to hear it. I accepted the invitation with a feeling that was far from serious apprehension of communicating with anything beyond my power to discover.

"Before I heard the sound, we seated ourselves around a table. As soon as we got quiet, I heard a slight but distinct rapping on the floor, apparently on the under side. Although I concluded

that such a sound *might* be made by machinery, I could see no possible motive in the family taking so much pains to deceive people, as they received nothing but annoyance and trouble in return for their pains. I proceeded to ask some questions, and they were answered very freely and correctly. I asked if it would rap my age. It was done correctly. I then took my memorandum-book from my pocket, and *wrote* my questions, so that no person could know the nature of the questions. I would write, 'rap four times; rap one; rap seven;' and to each and every question I got a *correct answer*. I then laid aside my book, and proceeded to ask similar test questions *mentally;* and, as before, received correct answers.

"I could not believe that persons present had the power to discern my *thoughts*, and make these sounds in answer, for the sounds have a peculiarity not easily imitated. To suppose this to be the case, would make the matter a still greater mystery. I knew they could not give those answers, for there were questions answered which they could not know anything about.

"At another time, being present with Isaac Post, of Rochester, I tried the experiment of counting in the following manner. I took several shells from a card-basket on the table (small lake shells), closed my hand, and placed it entirely out of sight, and requested as many raps as there were shells. It was done correctly. As I knew how many shells there were in my hand, I resolved to test it another way, to see if there was a possibility of my *mind* having any influence in the matter. I took a handful of shells, without knowing how many I took myself. Still the answers were correct. I then requested Mr. Post, who sat by the table, to put his hand in the basket, take out some shells without knowing the number, and pass them into my hand, which I immediately closed and placed in a position where none could see it. The number was told as correctly as before. We continued this class of experiments for a long time, without the least failure in getting correct answers."

There could be no mistaking these tests. They could not be

influenced by our minds, for we did not ourselves know what the answers should be. This places a quietus on its being anything governed by the minds of those asking questions, or those who hear it most freely. The proof of getting answers, and correct ones, to mental questions, and to thoughts where questions are not asked, is as plain as even the rapping itself.

On the 12th of January, 1849, H. D. Barron, then of Auburn, N. Y., called at the house of the Fox family, in Rochester, in company with James J. Owen, of that city. They were seated around the table *in the day-time*, and it moved about the distance of one foot. They then moved away from it, and it moved back and forth when no one touched it, and in full view, several times. No one was present except the persons named, and Mrs. Fox and her three daughters. Mr. Owen then put down a number of figures where none of the company could see them, and when he came to the ones which were the number of years of his age, there was rapping. Mr. Owen remarked that there was no one present who knew his age, and that the answer was correct. In the same way it told the number of months over the years. These were done at the request of one of the persons present.

The next day (Sunday), H. D. Barron called at the house of the Fox family. After several questions had been answered, a spirit, purporting to be that of a relative, called for the alphabet, and spelled the following sentence: — "Henry, when you get home, R. will hand you a letter from ——." On the following Tuesday morning he arrived in Auburn, and was handed a letter by R——, mailed at New York, and received at Auburn on the Sunday that the communication was given in Rochester. The persons present at the time this communication was received were Mrs. Fox, her youngest daughter, Isaac Post, of Rochester, and the one to whom the communication was addressed.

Judge Hascall, of LeRoy, related to the author a fact that came under his notice while examining into these phenomena in company with Mr. Summerfield, a lawyer of the same place, which strongly illustrates the power of spirits to produce any sound by

their will. He (Judge H.) stated that they were at the house of the Fox family, and went into a dark room. They called for the sounds to be made like a band of martial music. As they requested, the sounds were produced in a most beautiful and thrilling manner. The playing of the instruments and the heavy beating of the bass drum were perfectly imitated, together with the sound of the roar of distant cannon. Both Mr. Summerfield and Judge Hascall agreed in saying that the whole thing was so truthfully and exactly imitated that the effect produced on the hearers was of the most thrilling character.

In the month of November, 1849, Elias J. Doty, of Macedon, Wayne county, was at the house of Mr. Pierpont, of Rochester, where two sisters who were mediums were present. They had seen the table move, and had other demonstrations while the young ladies were in the room. After they had left the room, Mr. Doty was standing a few feet from the table, and the other person still further from it, when he remarked that it would be a still greater proof to him if it would move without the presence of the young ladies. As he said this, the table moved some distance, and only the three persons in the room, and those *not* near the table. We state this on the authority of Mr. Doty, and none who know him need better evidence.

The author has known several persons to be sitting around a table in conversation, and when they ceased the signal for the alphabet would be called for, and a sentence would be spelt like this: —— (naming one of the company), thinks so and so (mentioning exactly what their thoughts were). At one time, several persons were present; one wrote on a piece of paper to another something about two other members of the company, which, although unimportant, they did not wish the others to know; but, as if to convince all of their power to tell their thoughts, the signal was given for the alphabet, and the same spelled out that they had written. This has so often been the case, or similar occurrences, that it is placed beyond dispute by those who have tried the experiment of getting answers to mental questions. The fol-

lowing is an extract from the original memorandum made by the author after many opportunities for investigation: —

"At one of the first opportunities I had of investigating, I had the following proof, which appeared to be anything but evil to me, although the direction was about 'worldly matters.'

"Myself and wife and a female friend of ours had been investigating until a late hour, — nearly twelve o'clock at night, — and a violent storm had sprung up. It was necessary for us to go to another part of the city, and it was so late that the public conveyances had all left their usual stand, and we were at a loss how to get a conveyance for the females. The direction was, 'Go to the corner of the street, and there you will find a conveyance.' I went as directed, but saw no carriage, and began to think I had been misdirected; but, just as I was turning to go back, a sleigh came up the street, and, without my speaking, the driver hailed me, and inquired if I wanted a conveyance. I of course took it, and carried the females home.

"On one occasion a gentleman of Rochester was indebted to a woman who was in great need of the money. The spirits directed her little sister to go at such a place in the street, at a certain hour in the day, and she would meet the man, who would pay her three dollars for her sister. The little girl did not know the man who owed the money, but went as directed. At the appointed time she met a man who said to her, 'Are you the girl that lives with Mrs. —— ?' She replied in the affirmative. 'Here are *three dollars* I wish you would take to her,' said the man, handing her a bill; and passed on."

The following is an extract from a letter to the author, received from Mrs. Sarah D. Fish, a lady well known in Rochester. It was published at the time of the transaction, about four years ago:

"I watched with a sick friend about two years ago, and when all was still, and no one awake but myself, — at least, no one in the room except my sick friend, — I sat by the stove, and there

was a sudden loud rapping on the wood-work at my left hand. Coming in the stillness of the night, I was at first quite terrified, and stepped immediately to the bed where the sick person lay. My friend had heard it, and said, 'What rapping was that?' and asked for some drink. After I waited on her, I went to the watch, and found it to be just two o'clock. I had become exhausted for the want of sleep; I leaned my head back in my chair, and fell into a sweet sleep, from which I was awakened by a sudden rapping at my right hand (apparently) on the carpet. I stepped immediately to the watch, and it was *precisely half-past two, — just the time at which she was to take her medicine.*"

The following letter is from Judge Hascall, of Le Roy (since a member of Congress), who was one of the committee of investigation at Corinthian Hall, and who has taken abundant opportunity for investigation since that time, and whose honesty and powers for calm investigation will not be called in question by those who have any knowledge of the man. He is extensively known as a man eminent in his profession, and an upright and candid citizen.

"Le Roy, 13th February, 1850.

"Mr. E. W. Capron, — Dear Sir: Yours of the 12th instant is just received, in which you requested me to send you a statement of what I have witnessed of the phenomenon known as the 'Mysterious Rappings.' I should be pleased to give you a particular account of my investigations in endeavoring to discover the cause of the mysterious sounds, but other engagements prevent, and you must be content with a very imperfect sketch of them. As the committees appointed at public meetings at Corinthian Hall, to investigate and, if possible, detect and expose what was generally believed to be some ingenious device, had failed to ascertain the cause, and the persons who must be present when the rappings were made challenged further investigation, I concluded to inquire into this singular problem, and solve it if possible. Accordingly I visited the house where these young ladies reside, in company with several persons, and our efforts

were attended with no better success than were those of the committees whose investigations at other places had preceded ours. The experiment was repeated at the residences of several highly respectable families in the city of Rochester, to which the young ladies were invited, and the same rappings were heard, apparently at different places in the room at the same time, and our efforts to detect the cause at these places were fruitless. Among the persons who were present with me on this occasion were members of the legal and medical profession, — men of science and skill, — and we entirely failed to discover any art or machinery, philosophical apparatus or means whatever, by which the sounds and other manifestations were produced.

"I will not go into the particulars of the whole I witnessed during the investigations before referred to, but will state, generally, that I have witnessed much of the phenomena which you have mentioned in the pamphlet recently published by you at Auburn. "Yours respectfully,

"A. P. Hascall."

The following statement we are allowed to publish from John S. Clackner, of Ravenna, Ohio:

"At your request I will write a few instances of the mysterious agencies, alias spirits, in western New York, with which I was familiar previous to my removal to this place, and to which I am willing to testify, if necessary. Dates, or times of occurrences, I shall omit for brevity sake. I also wish it understood that in the following communications, when I say the spirits *answered*, that it was done by rapping and the use of the alphabet. This course I adopt in order to avoid a useless repetition of the words 'rapping' and 'alphabet.'

"My first interview with Mrs. Fish was at her residence, on Prospect-street, in Rochester. We were total strangers to each other, she supposing me from the country. After I got into the house, I remarked, it would be a gratification to me if the spirit would reveal my name to her, as I had been informed it had in

other cases. She said, 'Spirit, do you know this gentleman?' As quick as thought she was answered by loud raps, when she again said, 'Will you tell his name by the alphabet?' She was answered in the affirmative. She then commenced calling the alphabet, and was stopped by the spirit rapping at every letter in my name. Then she pronounced it audibly, and was confirmed by the raps. Subsequently, one evening, it would not allow me to stay in the room, alleging as a reason that I had not fulfilled my engagement to bring with me my wife and son. Mrs. F. urged it to permit me to stay; but it continued to spell out, 'He must go.' After some further expostulation, she said, 'You *may* stay.' It immediately called out for the alphabet, and spelled, 'Leah has done wrong — he must go.' At other times it was free to converse with me, but this evening it would say nothing to me. At another time the spirit commenced rapping voluntarily for the alphabet, and spelled out, 'M. has done wrong.' M. answered, 'Why, spirit, what have I done now that is wrong?' to which it answered, by the alphabet, 'You said I rapped this morning, at Andrew's; *I only gave you a sound.*' * *

"At another time the young ladies came to my house for advice upon domestic affairs. I proposed calling a meeting of friends on the subject. They consented, on condition that the spirits agreed thereto. They made several unsuccessful attempts in various places in that room for an answer from the spirits, until at length, at the front part of the house, it answered, and told them the reason of its silence in other places; it was, that 'there were eaves-droppers and enemies listening, and could hear.' It encouraged our project, and success crowned our efforts. * *

"At one time it requested one man present to set a sum in addition, and let no man see his figures but himself. He then pointed to any figure he chose, and asked the spirit to give as many distinct single raps as it amounted to, which was promptly and correctly done; also, the whole sum added up and proved, in the same way as learners in school do, with this difference only that it would instantly and deliberately rap the amount contained

in each perpendicular row of figures, allowing no time for first enumerating. I could relate many circumstances relative to this mysterious agency. Let one more suffice, where it had a direct moral influence on a young man that I introduced to the family where these sounds are heard. His name was not mentioned at the time, until the spirit desired to communicate with him. He asked who wished to communicate with him. The answer was, 'George Fox, the first Quaker.' 'What do you want to say to me?' said the youngster; and was answered by the spirit, 'I want you to stay after the others go away.' The evening passed in getting answers, beating time with music, &c., until the spirit spelled 'Done.' When the company began to disperse, each bidding the spirit 'good-night,' the young man was proceeding to go, when the spirit rapped for the alphabet, and spelled out his name and 'stay,' upon which I remarked that I supposed I must leave him. It then told me to stay. The young man asked who wanted to communicate with him, and it answered, 'Your sister.' She had been dead some eighteen years. He was much affected, and asked if she would answer him mental questions, and was answered in the affirmative. He asked many; we could hear the raps in answer, but did not know the nature of his questions. From that time a manifest change was perceptible in his conduct; whether the same continues, I am unable to tell.

"Respectfully yours,

"JOHN S. CLACKNER.

"Ravenna, Portage Co., O., Feb. 13, 1850."

The following is the first case of spiritual telegraphing on record. They are at this time quite common.

"The *Rochester Daily Magnet* of February 26, 1850, has the following new development. In alluding to it, the editor says, 'The matter is one well worthy of investigation. The gentlemen whose names are attached to the marvellous statement, are not wont to engage in tricks or impositions, and the developments made are worthy of that credence which should be given to all

new doctrines when well authenticated. Read them calmly and dispassionately.'

"*To Messrs. Jervis, Willets, Jones, and others:*

"GENTLEMEN: As we are required by authority, that we think we have no right to disregard, to make public the extraordinary communications recently witnessed at my dwelling, it becomes necessary to give you, and through you to the public, the facts which gave rise to the first interview, on Friday, the 16th inst. The novelty of the subject, and the state of the public mind, are such, that I feel prompted to do this, not only correctly, but as minutely as possible. Circumstances had placed me in a way to witness those remarkable communications called the 'mysterious rappings,' from the time of their origin in this city in the summer of 1848. After the severest tests, under a variety of circumstances, and at various places, for about one year, incontestable evidence addressed to my senses baffled my scepticism, and fully convinced me that they were the production of no human agencies. And as they profess to emanate from invisible intelligences called spirits, I had not allowed myself the liberty to attribute them to any other source, at least until some other origin could be detected. In hope of eliciting some further light on the mysterious subject, I proposed to a member of my family, who is susceptible to magnetic influence, to be put into a clairvoyant state, and see what might be presented in relation to it. She complied, and for this purpose was magnetized on the evening of the 12th inst., and in the presence of no other persons. The questions and answers were as follows: *Q.* Do you see anything? *Ans.* I see a stranger that I never saw before. He is not prepossessing in appearance, but is very elevated in his position, in a reflecting attitude, and is busily employed. *Q.* What is he doing? *A.* He is preparing work for you. *Q.* What is the nature of the work? *A.* He is establishing a line of communication. *Q.* Ask him, 'Is it practicable to get communications between two distant points by means of these rappings?' *A.*

'To be sure,' he says. *Q.* Can you ascertain who this stranger is? *A. Benjamin* (after a pause) *Franklin.* *Q.* Will you ask him to give you some signal by which we may know it is really Benjamin Franklin? After a silence of one or two minutes, a violent shock of her person induced me hastily to say, 'What is the matter — are you waking up?' *A.* No; you wanted a signal, and I told him, if it was Dr. Franklin, he might electrize me, and he did it. *B.* Has it injured you? *A.* No, I feel better; my head is clearer — I can see plainer. *Q.* Will you ask him where communications between distant points at the same time can be tested. *A.* He says at your own house. *Q.* Is there anything required of us in the matter? *A.* He says, 'Get two of those young ladies about whom there is so much excitement in your city, place them in extreme parts of two rooms, and you (meaning herself) be put in the same state in which you now are, and I will communicate with you.' *Q.* Who else may be in attendance? *A.* Mr. Jervis, and a few others who have been acquainted with this subject. *Q.* Will he direct as to time? *A.* He says, 'Consult the convenience of those concerned, and I shall be advertised of it.' *Q.* Are there any further directions to be given at this time? *A.* That is the end of the chapter.

"In compliance with the above, the interview on Friday the fifteenth was called, you and others notified, and the attendance of the two young ladies, Margaretta and Catharine Fox, secured, from whom, for prudential reasons, the above facts and preliminaries were withheld.

"Respectfully yours,

"N. Draper.

"Pursuant to the notice, as above stated, we, the undersigned met at the house of Mr. Draper, on Friday, the 15th inst., about four o'clock, P. M. We inquired for directions, and were answered by alphabet, 'Let Mrs. Draper be magnetized.' Through her the two young ladies were directed to retire to another room. The directions then were for Mr. Jervis, Mrs. Fox and Catharine

Fox, to be placed in a room at the opposite end of the house, and for Mr. Jervis to take notes. Margaretta Fox should be with the company in the parlor, and Mr. Draper take notes. This was done. The sounds were then heard in both rooms, by either company, exactly similar to the sounds heard in the telegraph office.

"*Question to the Clairvoyant.* What does that rapping mean, unlike any other sounds before heard by rapping? *Ans.* He is trying the batteries. The signal for the alphabet was heard, and on calling the letters, was spelled, 'She must be waked in ten minutes.' A watch was placed on the table, after noting the time, and covered up, and the question asked, if we could have a signal by sounds at the exact time, and was answered affirmatively. At the *precise* time the signal was heard. The question was then asked, 'Who shall wake her?' and she was instantly awoke with an apparent electric shock.

"At this point there was much interruption by persons coming into both rooms. The question was asked for further directions, and the answer was by alphabet, 'Things are not as I directed, therefore you cannot proceed at this time. There should be but four in each room.' Mr. Jervis and company came into the parlor, and his notes read as follows: 'Things are not as I directed them, therefore you cannot proceed at this time.' *Ques.* Can we have another opportunity? *Ans.* If I set the time and name the company, there shall be no fail. *Q.* Shall the appointment be now made? Answered affirmatively. The following persons were then named by the alphabet: Mr. Jervis, Mr. Jones, Mr. Draper, Mr. Willets, Mrs. Jervis, Mrs. Draper, Mrs. Brown, Mrs. Fox, Margaretta Fox and Catharine Fox. *Q.* May we know the time? *A.* Wednesday next, at four o'clock, P. M. *Q.* The place? *A.* Here.

"On the day appointed, Feb. 20th, the abovenamed persons convened; some of the company were late, and as soon as order was observed, this question was asked: 'What are the directions of Benjamin Franklin?' *A.* Hurry; first magnetize Mrs. Dra-

per. This was done, she immediately saying, 'He says we are behind the time, but he will forgive us this time; we must do better in future.' The company were divided as follows: Mr. Jervis, Mr. Jones, Mrs. Fox, Mrs. Brown and Catharine Fox, in a retired room, with two doors closed between them. Mrs. Draper, Mrs. Jervis, Mr. Draper, Mr. Willets and Margaretta Fox, remained in the parlor. Sounds unusually loud were heard in each room by either company, as before, resembling the telegraph sounds. They were so unusual that Miss Fox became alarmed, and said, 'What does all this mean?' Mrs. Draper, while her countenance was irradiated with animation, replied, 'He is trying the batteries.' Soon there was the signal for the alphabet, and the following communication was spelled to the company in the parlor: 'Now I am ready, my friends. There will be great changes in the nineteenth century. Things that now look dark and mysterious to you will be laid plain before your sight. Mysteries are going to be revealed. The world will be enlightened. I sign my name Benjamin Franklin. Do not go into the other room.'

"After waiting a few minutes, Mr. Jervis came into the parlor, saying that he was directed by the sounds to come and compare notes. They read as follows: *Q.* Are we all right? *A.* Affirmatively, signal for alphabet, and the following was spelled: 'There will be great changes in the nineteenth century. Things that now look dark and mysterious to you will be laid plain before your sight. Mysteries are going to be revealed. The world will be enlightened. I sign my name Benjamin Franklin. Go in the parlor and compare notes.' Mr. Jervis returned to his company, and by alphabet was spelled, 'Now all go into the parlor.' The notes were then compared in presence of the whole company. *Q.* Is there anything more from Dr. Franklin? *A.* I think I have given tests enough for this day. *Q.* Will it not be better to keep this matter private? *A.* No; they should be published. *Q.* In what paper. *A.* In the *Democrat* or *Magnet*. *Q.* Who shall prepare it for publication? *A.* George Willets.

Time and place were then designated for the same company to meet again, with two other persons added to the number.

"We sign our names as no parties, but as witnesses. If our testimony is incredible, impeach and reject it. If admissible, hand it over to the judge and jurors, — the public, — and charge them that we claim no interest aside from their own in their verdict.

Rev. Asahel Jervis,	Nathaniel Draper,
Edward Jones,	George Willets,
Rachel Draper,	Mary Jervis,
Mary Brown,	Margaret Fox.

"Rochester, Feb. 23, 1850."

CHAPTER IV.

SUSPENSION OF THE MANIFESTATIONS IN THE FOX FAMILY — RETURN OF THE SPIRITS — DIRECTIONS FOR PUBLIC INVESTIGATION — THE FIRST MEETINGS — EXCITEMENT ON THE REPORT OF COMMITTEES — RIOTOUS DEMONSTRATIONS — INCREASE OF MEDIA FOR RAPPING, WRITING, &c. &c.

THE spirits had long been urging the mediums to allow the utmost facilities for investigating this subject; but the aversion of the Fox family to the notoriety consequent upon such publicity was not easily overcome. Indeed, they resisted to the utmost all directions of that nature as much as possible. Directions were often given, which the mediums obstinately refused to follow. Long-continued resistance against the wishes and direction of the spirits came near stopping the communications altogether. The family were often urged on, and told that, if they refused to go forward and let the world hear, the matter would die with them, and be left for another generation to bring before the world.

In the month of November, 1848, the spirits informed the family that they could not always strive with them; that such was the mediums' continual disobedience to the spirits' requests, that they must leave them. To this the mediums made no objection, but declared that nothing could please them more, and they hoped they *would* leave. Accordingly, while a few friends were present, among whom were George Willets, and Isaac Post, of Rochester, and Milton Arnold, of Scipio, N. Y., the spirits announced that in twenty minutes they would bid them fare-

well and discontinue their manifestations, as they were unwilling longer to contend with such continued opposition. The friends conversed freely till the appointed time, when they spelled "We will now bid you all farewell." There were previously several messages of an affectionate character, and the whole scene was remarkably solemn and impressive. It was in vain that the friends urged them to give them some more proofs of their presence. They had departed, and silence prevailed. The mediums stoically declared that they were glad to be rid of them. They did not realize the fact, and had been so annoyed that they considered it a relief. Some of their friends called each day to see if the sounds had not recommenced; but the answer was "No." For the first three or four days the mediums continued their stoicism; but they soon began to realize their loss, and were affected even to tears when their friends called. They learned that they had lost friends that were exercising a constant guardianship over them, and ever ready to answer their inquiries.

On the twelfth day after the discontinuance of the sounds, the author happened to be in Rochester on business, and went with George Willets to call on Mrs. Fish and her sister Margaretta, who was with her; Catharine being then on a visit to Auburn. On our opening the gate, they came to the door, and with sorrowful faces told us that the spirits had left them and they could get no rapping. We answered that perhaps they would rap for us, if not for them. We stepped into the hall of the house and asked if the spirits would rap for us? Immediately we were greeted with a perfect shower of raps on the floor, the walls and the ceiling. Had a long-lost friend suddenly returned, the two sisters could not have been more rejoiced. For twelve days they had been made lonely by their absence, and they could now appreciate them as they had returned. From the looks of sadness, their faces were turned to smiles and rejoicing.

It was at this time that the first intimation was given us in regard to bringing the matter prominently before the public. They then proceeded to give their plan of the whole proceedings in

minute detail. The persons designated to bring the subject before the people were George Willets and E. W. Capron. This proposition was met with an absolute refusal. We had no wish to expose ourselves to public ridicule, and had never sought any notoriety in the matter, — never had been conspicuous as its advocates, and never expected to be. It was a "call" which we had no disposition to accept. On hearing of our refusal, an ambitious young man came forward and offered his services, urging his superior powers as an orator over the ones selected by the spirits; but, for some reason, the invisible intelligences refused to accept his proffered services, and, soon after the investigations had taken place, he became a very violent opponent of that spiritualism of which he had urged himself as a most fitting advocate.

The first message on this subject was given through the alphabet thus: "You all have a duty to perform. We want you to make this matter more public." We urged the awkwardness of the position we should be placed in, the ridicule that would be heaped upon us or any one who should attempt to lecture on this subject. The answer to this was: "That will be so much the better, — your triumph will be so much the greater."

The plan proposed by the spirits was as follows: Corinthian Hall should be hired; Mrs. Fish and Margaretta should go there; E. W. Capron should deliver the lecture, explaining the commencement of the sounds at Hydesville, and their progress up to that time, and George Willets should act as the business man, doorkeeper, &c. At each meeting there must be a committee of five persons, appointed by the audience, to investigate the matter and report at the next meeting. The spirits promised to make sounds so loud as to be heard in all parts of the hall. The names of several persons were given to accompany Mrs. Fish and her sister on the platform. Among these were Amy Post, and one or two other ladies, Rev. A. H. Jervis, N. Draper, Esq., Lyman Granger, and other well-known citizens. The charge for admission was to be twenty-five cents. All these directions were given by using the alphabet, without a suggestion on our parts. To this plan we

objected that Corinthian Hall, being the largest in the city, was larger than necessary, and too expensive; that people would not attend in numbers sufficient to pay expenses, and that we were not able to pay the bill ourselves. We were assured that we should have enough to pay expenses, and the end would be a complete triumph for all concerned. We were assured that it was the best course in order to silence all slanders and establish the truth; and they declared that this would prepare the way for a more general development of spiritual communication which would take place at no distant day.

After receiving so much of the directions, and still declining to go forward, the writer returned to Auburn. Catharine Fox was there with us, and through her the spirits urged us to do as we had been directed at Rochester. Finally, the spirits proposed that meetings should take place at private houses, where large parlors could be had, in order to test the ability of the spirits to make the sounds in the presence of a promiscuous assembly. My friends wrote me, urging the trial, at least, of that test. After much deliberation, we consented to make the trial, not without many misgivings as to the result. My friends at Auburn predicted a failure and disgrace for being engaged in so unpopular a cause; but I had made up my mind to make the trial, testing every inch of ground to see whether the promises would be fulfilled. I went to Rochester and commenced the meetings in private houses. They were often crowded to a jam, but the spirits made their promise good. The rapping was loud and distinct in every instance.

After testing the matter in this way for several nights, and receiving more minute directions and constant encouragement, we gave notice of a meeting to be held in Corinthian Hall, on the evening of the 14th of November, 1848.

At the appointed time, an audience of some four hundred persons assembled to hear what might be said, and also to hear the sounds, as the spirits had promised that they would produce the sounds sufficiently loud to be heard in all parts of the hall.

The lecture consisted of a simple and plain explanation of the whole matter, from its commencement to that time, carefully avoiding any assertion as to what it was; but merely stating, from well proved facts, what it was *not*. The audience listened with respectful attention, and at the close of the lecture appointed the following gentlemen as a committee of investigation, namely, A. J. Combs, Daniel Marsh, Nathaniel Clark, Esq., A. Judson and Edwin Jones.

This was the first great step towards laying the whole matter before the world in a way that should either settle its falsity or establish its truth. The fact that the audience appointed an intelligent committee to investigate the subject was very freely commented upon in a tone of assurance that now a "fraud would be exposed." So sure were the editors of the Rochester *Democrat*, that this was the last of the rappings, that they wrote an article, and had it in type, saying that the whole thing was exploded. When the committee reported, they had the article suppressed. They were disappointed in a very important and interesting item. The committee reported, in substance, as follows:

"That, without the knowledge of the persons in whose presence the manifestations are made, the committee selected the hall of the Sons of Temperance for investigation; that the sound on the floor, near where the two ladies stood, was heard as distinctly as at other places, and that part of the committee heard the rapping on the wall behind them; that a number of questions were asked, which were answered, not altogether right nor altogether wrong; that in the afternoon they went to the house of a private citizen, and while there the sounds were heard on the outside (apparently) of the front door, after they had entered, and on the door of a closet. By placing the hand upon the door, there was a sensible jar felt when the rapping was heard. One of the committee placed one of his hands upon the feet of the ladies and the other on the floor, and though the feet were not moved, there was a distinct jar on the floor. On the *pavement* and on the *ground* the same sound

was heard, — a kind of double rap, as a stroke and a rebound, were distinguishable. When the ladies were separated at a distance, no sound was heard; but when a third person was interposed between them, the sounds were heard. The ladies seemed to give every opportunity to the committee to investigate the cause fully, and would submit to a thorough investigation by a committee of ladies, if desired. They all agreed that the sounds were heard, *but they entirely failed to discover any means by which it could be done.*"

Each one of the committee spoke for themselves, and they were well agreed as to the facts as stated.

After this report, and some discussion on the subject, the audience selected another committee, composed of the following persons: Dr. H. H. Langworthy, Hon. Frederick Whittlesey, D. C. McCollum, William Fisher, of Rochester, and Hon. A. P. Hascall (late member of Congress), of Le Roy. At the next lecture this committee reported that they went into the investigation at the office of Chancellor Whittlesey, and they heard the sound on the floor, on the wall and door; that the ladies were placed in different positions, and, like the other committee, they were wholly unable to tell from what the sound proceeded, or how it was made; that Dr. Langworthy made observations with a stethoscope to ascertain whether there was any movement with the lungs, and found not the least difference when the sounds were made; and there was no kind of *probability or possibility of their being made by ventriloquism, as some had supposed; and they could not have been made by machinery.*

Much excitement was manifested by the audience at the announcement of the second committee's failure to account for the sounds. Just in proportion as the honesty of the mediums were proved did the wrath of a portion of the community enkindle against them. The very fact that it was not a cheat seemed to annoy them.

On the third evening, a much larger number were present, and

a portion seemed determined that it should be found out. Mr. W. L. Burtis declared that those girls would not have *him* on the committee for a hundred dollars, intimating that *he* was known to possess unusual facilities for the detection of such a fraud. He was immediately voted on to the committee, and then declared that, if he could not find it out, he would forfeit a new beaver hat. Mr. L. Kenyon declared that if he could not find out the trick, he would throw himself over Genesee Falls; and *he* was straightway voted on to the committee. The other members of the committee were no more favorably disposed. The whole committee was composed of Dr. E. P. Langworthy, Dr. J. Gates, Wm. Fitzhugh, Esq., W. L. Burtis and L. Kenyon. This committee met at the rooms of Dr. Gates, at the Rochester House, and appointed a committee of ladies, who took the young women into a room, disrobed them, and examined their persons and clothing, to be sure there were no fixtures about them that could produce the sounds. When satisfied on this point, the committee of ladies tried some other experiments, and gave the young ladies the following certificate:

"When they were standing on pillows with a handkerchief tied around the bottom of their dresses, tight to the ankles, we all heard the rapping on the wall and floor distinctly.

"(Signed,) MRS. STONE,
MRS. J. GATES,
MISS M. P. LAWRENCE."

In the evening the committee, through their chairman, Dr. Langworthy, made a very full report of their examinations during the day. They reported that they excluded all friends of the two ladies from the committee room, and had the examination only in presence of the committee of gentlemen, and ladies chosen by them. Notwithstanding all this precaution, these sounds were heard when the ladies stood on large *feather pillows*, *without shoes*, and in other various positions, both on the floor and on the wall;

that a number of questions were asked, which, when answered, were generally correct. Each member of the committee reported separately, agreeing with and corroborating the first statements.

None but those who were present can tell the inquisitorial trials that Mrs. Fish and Margaretta were forced to undergo during these three days of trial. Never were two persons more thoroughly scrutinized, and never was triumph more complete.

The report of the last committee was more full and complete than any of the former ones. Mr. Burtis, who was so sure that he could find out the whole thing, was honest enough to report fully and frankly in the ladies' favor; and Mr. Kenyon did not throw himself over Genesee Falls, or explain how the sounds were made.

The report seemed to work the rowdy portion of the audience, who evidently came there to make disturbance, into a perfect furor. Josiah Bissel, Esq., soon after the audience had assembled, passed out, and soon returned with his hands full of "torpedoes," which he distributed among the boys, old and young, to throw upon the floor, explode and make a noise. This gentleman (?) was soon appointed "chairman of the meeting," by this gang of riotous men and boys, although others had hired the hall and paid for it, not for the purpose of a riotous meeting, but to investigate this strange phenomenon according to certain rules. The prominent and leading men, in all this noisy and indecent conduct, were, besides Mr. Bissel, ex-alderman Seeley and a couple of men by the name of Jerome, part proprietors or employees in the *Daily American* office, and a Major Packard, cabinet-ware dealer. The latter made a speech, in which he pretended that the sounds were made by leaden balls fastened to the ladies' dresses! Finding that all attempts to explain the matter further were useless, we left the hall in possession of the rowdies and the police, the chief of whom informed J. Bissel, Esq., that if any one was taken into custody it would be him.

Thus ended the public meetings; but they had done their work, and set a ball in motion which has already rolled over the whole

Union, and much of the civilized world besides. The attention of the public was called to it. The press commenced its comments, generally in ridicule, but still in a way that aroused the curiosity of people to know what it was.

During the investigation, the comments made by the press were various and conflicting. The *Daily Democrat* said, "There is some curiosity excited in this community, in regard to this thing, and it was decided (after the first committee's report) not to give it up so. These young women will have to be pretty smart, if they deceive everybody."

The Rochester *Daily News*, edited by John W. Hurn, said, "If the parties concerned refused to submit to any investigation, we would be the first to scout them as humbugs; but while they challenge scrutiny no man has a right to make any such charge. Even the vilest criminals are considered innocent until they are proved guilty, and surely an equal amount of charity (or justice) is due to persons who are, for aught that is known, among the most worthy and honest of our citizens."

The *Democrat* suggested that the mayor or chief of police would be a very proper person to be at the head of an investigating committee; whereupon the abovenamed *Daily News* says, "If any one can prove this affair is an imposition, got up to defraud the public, we shall fully agree with the *Democrat;* but we consider one proof of more importance than ten thousand assertions, and until such proof is adduced, we do not see the propriety of making indiscriminate charges of fraud and deception. The parties who bring this matter before the community offer every facility for investigation, and challenge the most searching scrutiny of which the keenest intellect is capable. Nothing more than this can be reasonably asked."

During the first lecture, a second advent preacher arose, and advocated the punishment of the medium, as he had no doubt but these were familiar spirits, such as we are forbidden by Scripture to consult. He was well satisfied that it was one of the devil's

old tricks "in these latter days." He warned the people to have nothing to do with it.

On Friday evening, after the lecture, three of the committee, namely, Hon. A. P. Hascall, D. C. McCollum and Wm. Fisher, repaired to the house of a citizen, and pursued their investigations still further. There were nearly a score of persons present. The members of the committee wrote many questions on paper, which no person present knew the purport of, and they were answered correctly. At times they would ask *mentally*, and would receive the answers with equal correctness, and they were fully satisfied that there was *something* present manifesting intelligence beyond the persons *visible*.

One of the committee tried the experiment of standing the ladies on glass, and failed to get any sounds; but the same was subsequently tried in presence of a large number of persons, and the sounds were as loud and distinct as before, on the floor, as usual.

One member of the first committee stated that he asked the question, "Who is it that wishes to communicate with me?" The answer was, "Your wife will talk." He evaded the answer, and gave the persons present to understand that he never had a wife. To use his own expression, when he gave his public report, he "*brow-beat it down.*" He would not admit there was any truth in it until he reported in the evening — then he stated it correctly — *he had lost his wife some time before.*

The committees were composed of men who, on any other subject, would be trusted to investigate where life or property were at stake. No citizen of Monroe county would refuse to submit the justness of his cause, even were he tried for life, to such men as those who composed the committees during the three days they were engaged in trying every mode to ferret out the cause of these sounds; and yet many persons persist in denouncing those, who even go to hear for themselves, as fools or knaves!

I insist upon it that those who were present at Corinthian Hall, and had a voice in the appointment of those committees, selected

from the best and most reliable men of the city of Rochester, should of all men be the last to cry humbug or collusion. They must be aware that, in doing this, they impeach their committees, and indirectly accuse them of being ignoramuses and incapable of impartial investigation, or of being accessory to one of the most successful, wide-spread and long-continued impositions ever palmed off on that or any other community.

When we take into consideration the facts that this matter had then been spreading for two years; that every means had been tried, in private circles and committees appointed by public meetings; that all had failed to discover anything like collusion; we may safely assert that, in regard to the sounds merely, the following facts were established beyond dispute, namely: That the sounds are heard in various places and at various times; that they are not produced by or under the control of any person or persons; and that they evinced a remarkable degree of intelligence. From the day the public investigations ended, the excitement increased. It spread, by the press, from one end of the Union to the other, and was soon reëchoed back from the other side of the Atlantic. The great majority of newspapers ridiculed it as a delusion, or denounced the mediums as impostors. But the ball was in motion, and opposition and slander could not stay its progress. The promises and predictions of the spirits in regard to the effect of such an investigation were fulfilled to the letter.

While these investigations were going on, the spirits would give information at night what kind of men were on the committee. They would say, "Such a man" — telling his name — "is a candid man; such a one is very sceptical, and hard to convince," &c. When the investigation came on, we would find that we had been told correctly about the character of the different individuals composing the committee.

At one time, during the investigations, we were talking over the subject, telling how much ridicule would be heaped upon us for attempting to lay this subject before the world, and have it fairly investigated, and we had this sentence spelled to us, by

what purported to be the spirit of William Willets, father of George Willets: "Now don't get discouraged; though the path may look foggy, there is a bright cloud a little beyond. Soon the firmament will brighten, and those people, who now insult and scandalize this work of the Almighty, will walk off, hanging their heads, and saying, 'Well, we have investigated and proved naught against those insulted people; here we stand, just as ignorant as when we first heard it. You know that in all new sciences there is always something to contend with, and when things take a turn, and you know you have conquered, 'thou wilt feel thou art treading on holy ground.'" We at first thought it strange that there should be so sudden a change from *you* to *thou*, and it was explained thus: "I made it 'holy,' instead of 'haunted.'" We then knew it to be a quotation from a song called, "*The Haunted Ground.*"

From time to time other mediums have made their appearance, not only for vibratory sounds, but for writing and other exercises supposed to be induced by spirits. Among the most remarkable cases of writing mediums in that city, may be mentioned Charles Hammond, formerly a clergyman of the Universalist denomination, and Isaac Post, a well-known and highly-esteemed citizen, for many years, and until his practical goodness outgrew them, a member of the Society of Friends. From an acquaintance of some years with Mr. Post, I can testify to his honesty and integrity. He is a man who would not knowingly deceive, and is not generally supposed to have an over-abundance of credulity. By his hand a book of some two hundred and fifty pages has been written, which he supposes to be entirely without any action of his mind. It consists of communications from the spirits of many distinguished statesmen and philanthropists; many of the articles being characteristic in style of the alleged authors, beyond Mr. Post's power to indicate. Yet it cannot be denied that there is a very striking similiarity of *sentiment* in all the incongruous characters in the book, and all assimilate to Mr. Post's particular views. I should rejoice to know that *all* of the spirits making those communi-

cations are as really correct in their general views as Isaac Post.

Mr. Hammond has produced three books in the same way. He also claims to be empowered or assisted by spirits to heal diseases, talk in unknown tongues, dance and perform various gymnastic exercises, such as shaking the arms and hands, perform Indian dances, whooping, &c. There are others of this kind of mediums in Rochester, as well as other places. How much is spiritual, and how much to be ascribed to other causes, is only to be determined by a careful examination of the facts.

It will be found, without doubt, that there is much, not only in Rochester but in every place where these phenomena have prevailed to any great extent, that is the result rather of a peculiar nervous sensibility and susceptibility, than of any intelligent agency operating out of, or independent of, the individuals exercised in various ways, which a too credulous class of individuals have attributed to the influence of spirits. The scenes enacted in Rochester, which are narrated in this chapter, are sufficient to show that great care should be exercised in the investigation of this subject, and, while all due weight is given to the claims and influences of superior intelligences, we should be cautious about adopting every singular exercise of the nerves or body as an emanation from spirits.

CHAPTER V.

MANIFESTATIONS IN AUBURN, N. Y. — VISIT OF CATHARINE FOX — REMARKABLE TESTS AND PROOFS OF SPIRIT POWER — SLANDERS OF THE PRESS — STRANGE DEMONSTRATIONS — A NEW MEDIUM, MRS. SARAH A. TAMLIN — SPIRIT MUSIC.

After my investigations in Rochester, I was anxious to unravel the mystery, if possible, and obtain some rational solution of what, in the first instance, I was very reluctant to believe anything of spiritual origin. With a view to satisfy myself in this respect, I induced the parents of Catharine Fox, then about twelve years old, to allow her to come to Auburn, and spend several weeks in our family.

It was here that we had the best opportunity of seeing and hearing the manifestations in all their different phases. The medium was tested in every conceivable way. She slept with the ladies in the house, — different ones, — and was tested by them, as well without a dress as with. No kind of device was left untried to discover if there could be any trick, or any way of accounting for the strange occurrences on any known laws, applicable to mundane phenomena. It was at this time that the matter was forever settled, in my mind, in regard to the spiritual origin of the sounds. I, with all the family (the family of Capt. G. B. Bennet, with whom we boarded), had proofs that placed it beyond our power to doubt, if we wished to. Conviction from actual facts was forced upon us, and we could not resist. It was impossible to conceal the fact that such occurrences were taking place at our residence; and the applications soon became very numerous to see and hear. In a few days, the only daily paper printed

in the city commenced its scurrilous attacks on all who would not shut their eyes and ears to the whole matter. Of course this increased the curiosity and anxiety to hear. One of the first of these articles had the following remarkably sensible slander in it: "It will be recollected that its operations at Hydesville were carried on with much skill and success for several weeks, exciting a vast commotion in the region round about. But it was finally ascertained, by some prying individual, that Mr. Fox himself, at whose house the miracles were performed, had contrived the whole matter, and by *an ingenious arrangement of springs, wires*, &c., was enabled to make a great variety of supernatural sounds, and to get up many wonderful sights, such as the locomotion of chairs, tables, books and other household fixtures. As soon as its operations were discovered, it departed in disgust, and has remained in retirement until its present visit to Auburn."

It is due to the present editor of the *Auburn Daily Advertiser* to state that Henry Montgomery was the editor when this false and stupid paragraph appeared. But such things awakened inquiry, and had an effect directly opposite to that intended by the author of the slander. This was not the only persecution to which the friends of an impartial investigation were subjected. Religious bigotry and rank scepticism united in their opposition, as if it were a crime to learn anything new.

The manifestations were various and astonishing during this visit, and have scarcely ever been excelled. They consisted of rappings, touchings, moving various articles, and playing on musical instruments. I give a few extracts from my private journal, as written down at the time of the occurrences.

At one time we had been discussing the subject of how much or how little reliance could be placed upon the directions received through this source, and we were directed to sit by the table to receive a message. We did so, and received the following, which, as usual, was received by using the alphabet:

"Now all listen to what we say. We want you to be better.

You have doubted our words; you will see the time when you will be ashamed when you look back to the time when you said, 'I don't know what to think — they are evil spirits — I doubt the truthfulness of it.' Now doubt no more, but all have sisterly and brotherly feelings; this is a message from God."

The conversation above alluded to was carried on while the medium, through which we received the communications, was out of the house visiting her friends, so that she had no knowledge of our conversation until this message was given us. I (and all who have taken pains to get at the facts of all these demonstrations) have frequently had a hand laid on my arms, shoulders or head, when no person would or could do it, having all their hands held by each other. These demonstrations, like the others, generally leave a feeling of electricity where they touch. The hand feels much like one of a person who is in a magnetic sleep, being colder (generally) than the hand of persons in a normal state, and having a moisture like a cold perspiration upon it. There is not, usually, any feeling like that of a hard hand, or one made up with the usual amount of bones in it. It is generally soft and smooth, although, at our request, it will change both its temperature and texture. It will in one instant feel as cold as ice and as warm as a common hand of flesh.

So perfectly natural is the touch, when an arm is taken hold of by this invisible hand, or it touches in any other way, that, although you hold every hand in the room, you can hardly believe it to be other than some of them. But the proof is positive and the witnesses are numerous. Then, too, just request a change from natural warmth to the coldness of ice, and you feel the change without the hand being removed. It is past the art of man thus to change the temperature of his body.

We have taken a common pocket Bible, and have laid it on the table with the strap put through the loop, and have awaited in silence the result. Soon we would hear the leaves begin to turn, and finally it would spell "Get the light," and we would find the

book laying open at some particular chapter, which generally had something to say about spirits. Other books have been opened, and appropriate poetry been pointed out. The phenomena of pulling the clothing, handling, moving tables, etc., often take place when none present are thinking of them, so that *their* wills do not influence the matter.

"Sunday Evening, October 7th. This evening we were directed to go into the hall, and take the guitar. We went, and while there the guitar was played by unseen hands, and played so exquisitely, too, that it seemed more like far-distant music to one just aroused from midnight slumbers, than the music of an instrument a few feet from us. Several tunes were thus played, while not a person in the room knew how to play a tune on that or any other instrument. Witnesses present this evening at the house of Mr. Bennet, Mrs. Burton Straight, of Troy, Bradford County, Penn., Mrs. G. B. Bennet, R. M. C. Capron, E. W. Capron, and H. D. Barron, of Auburn."

"Tuesday Evening, October 16th. Several persons present at the house of D. C. Miller. We were directed to take the guitar into a dark room, and it would be played. We accordingly did so, and many tunes were played, and in such positions that we knew no one could do it if there had been any one present who knew how; but there was not. There were none there who could play a tune in the light, much less in the dark, the owner not being there. Besides this, they (the spirits) moved books and other articles to different parts of the room. A paper box was taken from the table, the contents were emptied into the cover and placed in the hands of H. D. Barron. After this a small book was taken from the same table and placed in the hands of the same individual. One of the company accidentally touched the hand of another, when he asked, 'Did anybody touch my hand?' The alphabet was called for and the question answered, 'Yes, Capron touched your hand.' So it will be seen that, although it may be dark, there is something present that can tell if any one

attempts a trick. One of the company was told to take off her ring. She did so, laid it in her hand, and it was taken away. We all sat still until directed to get the light; when, upon looking a little, we found the ring with a girl's hair-band put through and pinned to the apron of the person who sat next to her, in such a manner that they were pinned together. This was done while we had hold of hands, and no possibility of its being done by the individuals present. The witnesses present were Justin Sturtevant and wife, H. N. Thompson, Mrs. Mary Miller, E. W. Capron, Mrs. S. A. Tamlin, Miss Amanda Hoskins, Henry D. Barron, Mrs. R. M. C. Capron, and Miss Catharine Fox.

"Saturday Evening, October 20th. This evening we had asked for some different demonstrations, and our request was complied with. We heard the sounds on the wall, bureau, table, floor, and other places, as loud as the striking with a hammer. The table was moved about the room, and turned over and turned back. Two men in the company undertook to hold a chair down, while, at their request, a spirit moved it, and, notwithstanding they exerted all their strength, the chair could not be held still by them. As we sat by the table the cloth was removed to a different part of the room. The combs of several ladies were taken from their heads and put into the heads of others, and afterwards the combs returned to their owners, and placed in the hair as before. There was a person present this evening who had been suspicious that the guitar was played a few nights before by some of the persons present. The first thing, when we came together was, for the alphabet to be called for by the spirits, who spelled, 'A. thinks R. and C. played the guitar!' Thus were her thoughts revealed before the company. At another meeting another person was told the same thing, although she had never expressed to any one her thoughts. Witnesses the same as the evening previous, except Mr. and Mrs. Sturtevant."

During one of these evenings a wish was expressed that we might see the hand that touched us. On looking towards the

window (the moon shining through the curtain), we saw a hand waved to and fro before, and near the top of it. We could discover no other part of a form. This we have witnessed many times ourselves, and several have discovered distinctly the features of persons whom they knew, and who had been dead for years.

On one occasion, when several persons were present, the guitar was taken from the hands of those who held it (they taking hold of hands), and *put in tune* and commenced playing while it passed around the room above their heads. It was also taken from one person and passed to others in the room. In this way for nearly two hours it continued to play and keep time with the singing, and the guitar taken by this unseen power to different parts of the room while playing. The witnesses present at this time were James H. Bostwick, Esq., Police Justice, Miss Sarah Bostwick, Mrs. F. Smith, H. D. Barron, and R. M. C. Capron.

One evening, while several ladies were present, some of them requested that the spirits would take their hair down. Accordingly it was done. One of them had her hair taken down and done up in a twist, and one of them had hers braided in four strands.

On one occasion we were getting the guitar played by these unseen musicians, and were directed to sing several different tunes, among which were "*Get off the Track*," and "*The Old Granite State*." The guitar was played, as the song went on, in company with the voices. While it was playing Dr. H. Robinson passed his hand over the whole length of the strings several times, within half an inch of them, to see if it was possible that any one present was playing it and trying to deceive. There was no difference when he passed his hand over. The following persons were present on this occasion: Dr. H. Robinson, M. A. Hilman, Mr. Henry Sheffield, Westerly, R. I., C. V. Woodward, Mary M. Bennet, E. W. Capron, E. A. Warden, P. M., Mrs. E. A. Warden, Lucie Gardner, R. M. C. Capron, and G. S. Wilson.

After the first visit of Catharine Fox, Mrs. Sarah A. Tamlin, a lady about thirty-six years of age, and a respected member of

the Methodist Episcopal Church, became a medium; and through her there have been some of the most remarkable manifestations on record. She was also one of the most reliable mediums I have ever met with. The sounds were not, generally, as loud with her as with the Fox family, although they were as fully reliable. Mrs. Tamlin had, for some time, been a most excellent clairvoyant.

The first knowledge we had of Mrs. Tamlin's mediumship was in this wise: several persons were occupying one room in the house of D. C. Miller, Mrs. Tamlin being among them. I, in company with two or three others, was with a clairvoyant — Miss Amanda Hoskins — in another room, witnessing her clairvoyant powers, when she suddenly exclaimed, "The spirits have rapped to Mrs. Tamlin!" and ran to that room. We all followed, and, as we entered, they exclaimed, "The spirits have rapped to us!" We then sat down and heard the sounds, but so low that they could only be heard by an effort. From that time they continued, and increased in volume, as did all other kinds of manifestations.

On one or two occasions spirits have made themselves visible to persons in the circle at Auburn. We were at one time divided into two parties, in different rooms, as above related. In one room we were urging Miss Mary M. Bennet to be magnetized, as she was one of the most reliable and spiritual clairvoyants ever developed. For some reason she felt an aversion to it that evening, but was about to yield, when the face of her grandfather appeared before her, and whispered, "No, no, sweet one!" and disappeared. She had not been thinking of her grandfather, and had never before seen a spirit in her normal state. She did not inform the company of this occurrence, but Mrs. Tamlin, being in a clairvoyant state, in the other room, told their company that Mary had seen a spirit. After this was told to us Mary informed the company of the circumstance.

The demonstrations I shall hereafter mention will be mostly when she was present.

"WEDNESDAY EVENING, June 20th. Present six persons, and none of the family of Mr. Fox in town. The rapping was heard very freely by all. The table moved on the floor with no person touching it — moved to the distance of a foot or more and back, in various directions. At our request, the table (which was a very light one) was held down to the floor so that it required the whole strength of a man to move it from its position. We also held one side, and requested, if there was power to do it, that it would be drawn away from us; this was done, and our strength was not sufficient to hold it. On the light being taken out of the room (the persons in the room placing themselves in a position where each would know if any others moved), the table-cloth was taken from the table and very compactly stowed away under it, near one corner. A hat which was on the table was turned over the table-cloth, in a manner that nearly hid it from view. The table was then raised from the floor on one side, and there stood, although we used considerable strength to push it down. While the table stood in that position, by placing our hands upon it we would feel a quick, tremulous motion, like the action of a galvanic battery. The witnesses present at this time were Miss Mary M. Bennet, H. D. Barron, Mrs. Mary Miller, Miss Amanda Hoskins, Mrs. Sarah A. Tamlin, and E. W. Capron."

Mrs. Capron and Mrs. Tamlin were in Mr. Tamlin's house alone, when a rapping commenced and gave the signal for the alphabet. On repeating it over, the following sentence was spelled out: "Sarah (Mrs. Tamlin) *is going to be sick.*" As she was then apparently as well as usual, they were somewhat surprised, and Mrs. Tamlin said, "Why! not very sick, am I?" The answer was, "Yes, very sick, and Rebecca had better not stay alone with you this afternoon." This was some time in the forenoon. Mrs. C. went home at noon and returned about one o'clock and found Mrs. Tamlin vomiting severely. She soon fainted, and continued to have fainting fits of very long duration all the afternoon and through the night. Every time she was about to faint

we were told by the sound, which would sometimes spell out, "*Watch her.*" The same faithful guardian told us what medicine to administer — what to do — told when it would be safe for a part of the watchers to leave — told them (two hours before the time of leaving) just how many fits she would have during the night — when she would begin to recover, and when she would be well; and all was fulfilled to the letter. The persons present during part or all of the time that these directions were being given, were Mrs. R. M. C. Capron, E. W. Capron, Mrs. Mary Miller, Miss S. A. Bennet, of Auburn, and Miss Mary H. Cooper, of Williamson, N. Y. Directions have been given in numerous cases to the sick by this unseen agency. In this instance it purported to be the spirit of Mrs. Tamlin's mother.

On another occasion Mr. Tamlin arose before light in the morning and went to the barn, where his team was kept, leaving a candle burning on the stand near the bed. Mrs. Tamlin was awakened from sleep by a loud rapping on the stand. She looked at the stand, and found that a spark from the wick of the candle had fallen down and caught to a paper which was on the stand, and was just about to communicate to the curtains of the bed. The timely warning saved the house, and, very probably, Mrs. Tamlin, from being consumed by the flames.

At one time Mrs. Tamlin was at the house of Mr. G. B. Bennet. They were told to go in the dark and take the guitar. They did so, and the strings vibrated two or three times, when they stopped, and the signal for the alphabet was given; and, on calling over the letters, the following was spelled out: "Sarah (Mrs. Tamlin) *is going to faint.*" It was totally dark in the room, and there was no means of any person's knowing the fact. A light was brought, but Mrs. T. had fainted before it arrived. The following persons were in the room, and can testify to the above statement. R. M. C. Capron, Miss Mary M. Bennet, Mrs. S. A. Tamlin, S. N. Smith, dentist, Charles W. Bennet, G. S. Wilson, and A. L. Dibble.

Mrs. Tamlin was, so far as I have been able to learn, the first

medium in whose presence the guitar, or other musical instrument, was ever played, without visible contact, so as to recognize tunes. In her presence, it was played with all the exactness of an experienced musician, although she is not acquainted with music, or able to play on any instrument. The tones varied from the most loud and vigorous, to the most refined touches of the strings that could be imagined.

The most beautiful manifestation I have ever seen recorded, was also first noticed in the presence of this same medium. A circle, consisting of H. D. Barron, Mary M. Bennet, R. M. C. Capron, Mrs. Tamlin, and perhaps one or two others beside myself, was sitting at Mrs. Tamlin's house. I had magnetized the medium, and, after various manifestations by the spirits, she said that they were about to do something new, which she did not understand. After sitting a few minutes we heard a low sound like the most distant sound of a locomotive whistle. I remarked that I thought it was the car whistle. Soon, however, the sound grew louder, and softened into the most exquisite music. One of the company was requested to sing, and, as she did so, the beautiful music accompanied. The sound was that of the most exquisite notes of an Æolian harp. An attempt at description would be useless, for it exceeded in beauty the highest ideal of heavenly harps, so often sung from the hymn-books, and preached from the pulpits, in seasons of religious excitement. After this we frequently had the same music in presence of Mrs. Tamlin and the same circle; at times it would resemble the finest conceivable music of the human voice, and almost be recognized as divided into words.

Another phase of this musical manifestation was the imitation of "Fabyan's horn." This was first manifested when Henry C. Wright, a well-known philanthropist, was at Rochester, N. Y., where Mrs. Tamlin was present. He called for the spirit of N. P. Rogers, and asked him to sound the horn; when immediately a sound came like the winding of a horn, and its reverberation among the distant hills, echoing and reëchoing for a long time.

Mr. Wright had visited the White Mountains in company with N. P. Rogers and others, some years before, and heard Fabyan, the hotel-keeper, wind his horn, and admired the wonderful echoing among the Granite Hills of New Hampshire. It was this that was so exactly imitated, and a description of which was published by Mr. Wright in a pamphlet.

Soon after Mrs. Tamlin became a medium, the sounds commenced in the family of Mr. D. D. T. Benedict, then visiting about a mile north of the city. The sounds were at first very low, but gradually increased in volume until they became as loud as those with Mrs. Tamlin. It was through her, as a medium, that the somewhat widely known "Auburn Circle," or "The Apostolic Circle," had its origin.

As this has been a very singular movement, I occupy some space in giving the particulars of its origin. The nucleus around which it was formed was that of two or three men, who were strongly imbued with the second advent faith, and who first sought, by spiritual communications, to confirm their interpretation of certain portions of the Bible, supposed to be expressions in favor of the speedy termination of all mundane affairs by a general conflagration. So determined was one of the first of these men, in his sectarianism, that he declared, on his first visit to Catharine Fox, that unless the spirits answered in accordance with his views, he knew they were evil spirits, or no spirits at all. At this interview he obtained no satisfaction, and no confirmation of his theory. Soon after, he became acquainted with Mrs. Benedict, and adding one or two others of like faith, he commenced a circle. The communications obtained all partook of the nature of their minds. The peculiar phraseology of the second advent advocates pervaded the whole of them. It was not long after the formation of the circle before it was proclaimed that they received communications directly from the Apostles and Prophets, and, generally, no one else. They were directed to commence the publication of a series of "Scripture Expositions," which were to be given directly from the original authors of the different books. The persons named

by the apostolic spirits as the publishers were Daniel D. T. Benedict, Ann Benedict, Edward H. Baxter, Moses Brown, Charles Coventry, and one or two others. The orthography of the apostles was sadly at fault; while the "interpretations" were remarkable for nothing but their weak and puerile contents. They were directed to be published in numbers, and the members of the circle were told that they would produce a great convulsion in the theological world, meet with an immense sale, and be no pecuniary loss, but a large profit to the publishers; all of which proved to be a mistake; for the theology of the world withstood the shock, the sales were very limited, the publishers lost nearly all the money invested; and, finally, the publication was discontinued before a tithe of the work, at first laid out, was accomplished. Notwithstanding the failure in one enterprise, the apostolic circle continued to meet and have plans developed for them to follow, and were firm in the "apostolic" faith, until the migration of the faithful to Mountain Cove, in Virginia, of which a minute account will be found in a succeeding chapter.

CHAPTER VI.

CONTINUED MANIFESTATIONS AT AUBURN — THE "APOSTOLIC CIRCLE" — THE MOUNTAIN COVE MOVEMENT — ITS FORMATION, PROGRESS, AND DISSOLUTION — ASSUMPTION, FANATICISM AND FOLLY.

THE number of mediums in Auburn, during the summer of 1850, increased very rapidly, until there were from fifty to one hundred in different stages of development. There were not as many developed as mediums for the rappings as for other varieties of the manifestation. In general, they would become possessed by the spirits, who would communicate their ideas by causing the feet or hands to rap on the floor or table; or by using their organs of speech — the words coming from the mouth with a convulsive force; or by writing with the hand. Many also became clairvoyants. By any of these means excellent tests were frequently obtained, as well as much discordance.

It is necessary to say — in order to represent the manifestations at Auburn in their true light, and that they may be compared with those of other localities — that a great majority of the communications were narrowed down to the mental capacity of the mediums through whom they were received. In most instances — no difference who the spirit purported to be, or how high his literary character — the communication, when produced, was of no higher order, in points of orthography, or style of expression, than was that of the medium. To illustrate this a fact will be related, as follows: There was a young lady, named Laura Claudius, who was a clairvoyant medium, and through whom, also, the "sounds" were produced with remarkable freedom and force. Many bona fide tests were given through her, both by means of

her clairvoyant powers, and by the rappings; yet no communication was ever spelled through her by the sounds, or written by her hands — the only reason for which appearing from her own ignorance of spelling. Through other mediums, also, the spelling was in precise accordance with their orthographical attainments. Yet, by all of these mediums, remarkable tests, and occasionally high degrees of intelligence, were received.

Many were made to speak in what were called "unknown tongues," among which, it was claimed, were Hebrew, French, Italian, Chinese, German, Indian, and others. And it was said by some respectable people that some of these languages were proved to be Hebrew, French, etc., but I am not personally acquainted with such a case.

One use to which conversations in "unknown tongues" by mediums were put, was claimed to be for the benefit of degraded spirits. It was said that multitudes of spirits, who had been for years, and even ages, in darkness, had now been granted the privilege of returning to the earth plane, where, by the aid of enlightened ones, who met them there, they were enabled to progress in goodness. And, in this belief, many meetings were held by believers, at which it was claimed that innumerable spirits congregated, and were prayed for and addressed by some more elevated spirits, through the earthly mediums present. In this way spirits claimed that very many were redeemed from dark and unhappy conditions.

Among the varieties of manifestations, purporting to be spiritual in this locality, there were often indications of pure diabolism; one of the most remarkable instances of which was as follows: In the spring of 1849, an individual by the name of Baham was hung at Auburn for the murder of a pedler named Adler. He was clearly proved guilty of the crime, but persisted to the last in asserting his innocence. During the last days of his earthly existence he manifested a very wicked spirit, cursing all who were instrumental in demonstrating his guilt — of whom was one of his brothers who was connected with him in the criminal

affair; and finally upon the scaffold, his last words were qualified by an oath. At the time of his execution, a seeing medium — a young lady — was rendered clairvoyant, that she might witness the operation, and, if possible, observe the separation of body and spirit, and the manifestation of the latter. The medium claimed to have witnessed the execution; and described the occurrences from stage to stage, until the final scene when the drop fell, which was so revolting and terrible in its appearance, that she fainted. From this time what purported to be the spirit of the executed man very often communicated through her. On these occasions the spirit uttered passionate maledictions against those whom he considered his enemies — declaring repeatedly that he would have revenge, and that he would ere long take the life of some of the Auburn people, all of whom he considered responsible in a degree for his unpleasant removal to the world of spirits. Thus matters went on, the spirit continually evincing the most fiendish and vindictive feelings, until in April, 1850, when he gained an opportunity of wreaking, to a considerable extent, his vengeance. The medium, above spoken of, one afternoon, used much freedom with this spirit, and received many manifestations from him by the violent movements of her arms. At length the spirit acquired so much control over her person that she was unable to guide her own movements, or to repel him; and he continued, for a long time, to strike her arms back against her chair, until both arms from the elbows upward were bruised black, and ultimately almost into a pumice. This operation finally was superseded by others of a more serious nature, in proportion as the spirit gained increased control over her organism. After various persecutions and tortures inflicted by the spirit upon the medium, he finally commenced strangling her, or at least so operated upon her as to produce the same effects that would be produced by a rope drawn tightly around her neck, — declaring, at the same time, that he would strangle her to death. His declarations were made through her mediumship and that of others who were present; and it was asserted by other spirits

through other mediums who were in attendance, that Baham was fully determined, if possible, to carry his threat into execution, and that it was not in their power, with the attending conditions, to prevent him, because he had previously secured so much possession of her person. The strangulation increased until the subject was unable to speak, or even to breathe without the utmost difficulty — making severe exertions, such as throwing up her hands, struggling, and uttering a peculiarly distressing noise in her efforts at inspiration. This state of the case continued for about thirty-six hours; during which time the house was thronged by visitors and friends, and every attempt possible was made to deliver her from her situation. Several strong and skilful magnetizers used their utmost exertions to dispossess her of the influence, whatever it might be, but did not at all succeed; physicians were called, both of the sceptical and the believing in spiritual matters, none of whom could aid her, or discover evidence of any bodily disease. In the mean time the body was suffering the severest agony, being entirely speechless, and her limbs and whole body were violently moved contrary to her own will and strenuous exertions; and fears were continually entertained that her breathing would be entirely prevented, and death ensue.

But now we come to the mode of her deliverance, which will introduce a manifestation of a decidedly opposite spiritual nature. As has been remarked, all the means which could be suggested by physicians, spiritual and anti-spiritual, friends and spectators of equally diverse opinions, the efforts of magnetizers and the various kinds of medicines which were administered — all and each produced no perceptible effect. But the manner of her relief was this: After she had been tortured for about a day and a half, another medium was sent to the house by spiritual direction. This medium, also a young lady, was a clairvoyant, rapping and writing medium; and upon her arrival a spirit, purporting to be that of the apostle Paul, threw her into the clairvoyant state, and caused her to take hold of the hands of the afflicted person; when within the space of five minutes she was entirely relieved of the per-

nicious influence. And after keeping both mediums in the clairvoyant condition for a few minutes longer — during which time they were exceedingly happy, that which claimed to be the spirit of Paul brought them both into their normal states, perfectly well. And thus ended what was considered by many intelligent witnesses to be a case of pure diabolism.*

It is to be remarked that, with the increase of mediums in 1850, in Auburn, there was apparently a decrease in reliability. And, although new investigators pretty generally received satisfactory evidence of spirituality in the manifestations, there was less confidence reposed in the communications by those who were of more experience, except by those who were of the belief that apostles and prophets were manifesting themselves. And this brings us to a notice of the movement in its more public aspect.

In the fall of 1849, Mrs. Benedict, above referred to, was used as a medium, through whom spiritual directions were given to James L. Scott, a Seventh-day Baptist minister of Brooklyn, for his removal to Auburn, to preach and otherwise operate as he might be called upon by the spiritual powers. The leader of the movement from the interior professed to be the apostle Paul, with the coöperation of the other apostles, the prophets, martyrs and many of Christian renown. Mr. Scott removed to Auburn, and there commenced preaching and devoting his energies to the success and spread of the Auburn circle, which assumed the title of "the Apostolic Movement."

* It may be proper here to state that whatever may be the facts in regard to the wicked intent of any spirits, there is danger of great annoyance, and even injury, resulting from free communications with spirits of a coarse and undeveloped character. Either ignorantly or wilfully — I am hardly able to decide which — they seek to get and keep control of the medium, making angular, discordant, and even vulgar and obscene communications. When, therefore, such spirits seek to make manifestations, unless they are seeking for information, and manifest due respect to the medium and those conversing, they should be repulsed with calm, kind firmness, and not allowed to get possession of those over whom they may exercise an injurious influence.

Succeeding the removal of Mr. Scott to Auburn, Rev. T. L. Harris, of New York city, visited that place in accordance with the directions of the spiritual agents of the circle. From this time forward, Messrs. Scott and Harris were the external leaders of the movement.

In February, 1850, a publication was established, entitled "*Disclosures from the Interior and Superior Care for Mortals.*" It claimed to be "edited, superintended and controlled," by spirits out of the flesh, and to have for its object "the disclosure of truth from Heaven, guiding mankind into open vision of Paradise, open communication with spirits redeemed, and proper and progressive understanding of the Holy Scriptures, and of the merits of Jesus Christ, from whom they originated in inspiration absolute, and of whom they teach as the only Saviour of a dissevered and bewildered race." It asserted that "the circle of apostles and prophets are its conductors in the interior, holding control over its columns, and permitting no article to find place therein, unless originated, dictated or admitted by them, — they acting under the direction of the Lord Supreme."

The matter contained in this publication was written by the hands of Mr. Harris and Mr. Scott, both of whom were declared by the "Paul" of the movement, through the mediumship of Mrs. Benedict, to be impressible writing mediums. The "conductors in the interior" by the rappings communicated that, by means of impressing the minds of these gentlemen, and then revising and confirming, through the rappings, what was thus written, they were able to present their spiritual messages to the world as perfect as though they were themselves in the flesh to deliver them; and that they were qualified by God to reveal the divine will in its plenitude; thus claiming to give the world a full and perfect expression of the mind of the Deity, as it relates to the affairs of men.

After the establishment of this paper, Mr. Harris returned to New York, and held public meetings and circles, in which he officiated as a preacher, laboring for the success of the spiritual

movement whose centre was in Auburn. He also continued to furnish those communications for the *Disclosures*, which appeared under the names of "John the Divine," "Daniel the Prophet," and all of the poetry claiming to be from "Coleridge," "Shelley," "Wadsworth," and others.

Mr. Scott remained in Auburn, where the paper was printed, preaching two or three times a week under the inspiration of spirits, as was said. He also presided at most of the circles and evening meetings, and maintained a full control over the spiritual affairs of the whole circle of believers as a body. No advice, command, or doctrine, which was delivered to any individual through different mediums, was recognized by Scott as entitled to any regard until the same was confirmed, *in his presence*, through Mrs. Benedict, by the "Paul" of the movement, — any decision given under these auspices being considered final; for it was asserted that, by these means, no mistaken or evil communications were received, Mr. Scott professing to have a secret sign by which he knew "Paul" from any other spirit. In this and other similar ways the whole authority of the movement was centred in one external agent, and everything which conflicted with this was promptly disowned and forbidden.

The number of adherents to the cause during the year 1850 became quite numerous, several hundreds attending regularly upon the public meetings, and as many as two or three hundred openly identifying themselves as supporters of the cause, among whom were some of the most respectable and intelligent people of Auburn. Indeed, the movement was in a very prosperous condition, and bid fair to become the largest of any of the religious denominations in that place. And thus affairs continued until intimations of a change of location were manifested, which resulted in a removal to Mountain Cove, Va.

In July of that year Mr. Scott related a vision or dream which he received during the hours of night, which he interpreted as indicating a design on the part of the spiritual directors of the movement to change the location from Auburn to some

other place. This interpretation was confirmed by subsequent visions, and by the rappings; and about the first of October, Mr. Scott and Mrs. Benedict, in company with several others, set out, under spiritual direction, in search of the locality — it being understood to be somewhere in Western Virginia.

The company stopped at Mountain Cove, Fayette Co., Va., upon being informed by the rappings that they were on the designated spot. Here farms were purchased, the printing-press located, and plans formed for extensive operations. The place was called the "holy mountain," and was claimed to be then occupied as was prophesied by the prophet Isaiah.

Other believers were then invited to the new location, and in the course of the succeeding winter there were nearly one hundred persons present.

Here the spiritual aspect of affairs became changed. Instead of Mrs. Benedict being considered, as before, the medium through whom, under the *guardianship* of Mr. Scott, "Paul" and other *human* spirits were consulted, Mrs. Benedict's services were dispensed with, and Mr. Scott asserted that he was *divinely inspired* and especially chosen of God as the instrument to reveal His plenary will, whether relating to moral, intellectual, social or temporal affairs. This claim was set forth by Mr. Scott, in what appeared to be an abnormal state, and will be more clearly shown by the following extract from his own words, spoken in his claimed inspired condition, and reported, *verbatim*, by two scribes:

"Know, O man, God purposeth to redeem, and proceedeth to the ultimation; nor hath error power to overcome; for Heaven directeth redeeming energy upon the lost race, before which the powers of darkness, though they struggle hard — in their season appear to triumph — shall flee away. And know thou, that since Heaven hath chosen an external agent, especial [James L. Scott], for the *Disclosures*, thence ultimating in *direct inspiration*, that from Him who controlleth all things issueth that law which prohibiteth spiritual influx being concentrated from the interior, to

affect unto interior impression and spiritual vision, upon James the chosen medium, without, *in each case*, direct permission from Him who ordereth this movement. Therefore, *over him a holy angel hath been appointed*, not especially for his sake, but for the harmony, truth and consummation perfect of the development. This law effecteth in the beings of the interior: and the angel defending opposeth the power of darkness, or designing spirits, nor suffereth *the spirits of the just* to control unto utterance through him of their thoughts, *save by permission.* He it is decreed — thus uttered — is *the* chosen medium for inspiration, and God protecteth and proceedeth to defend, as also Heaven purposeth to defend, all who shall be called unto like stations. Whoso seeketh the destruction of this medium, appointed of Heaven, opposeth direct the entire manifestation; thence *wareth with God*, and not the medium."

Parallel with the above is the following, spoken by Mr. Scott to a circle of believers, and the words taken down by a scribe, precisely as they were uttered.

"I read, written in letters of fire: Dost thou believe? And what dost thou believe? Who, thinkest thou, called thee here? Who, believest thou, appeareth to control? Who inspireth? Not an angel, for he is led; not a seraph, for he is controlled; *not created existence*, for that is inspired. Who, then, thinkest thou, called thee to the mountain? *Who but a God inspireth?* Believest thou the indication of these questions? Who is prepared for the coming of the Son of man? Who is it that hath consecrated and yielded themselves, severing therefrom every attachment to earth? Who have submitted their dictation and design entirely to Him who ordereth this manifestation from the regions of intelligence perfected? Who does not exercise external judgment, will and design? Who doth not violate that law by which perfect redemption shall be accomplished in fallen man? I AM THAT I AM *inquireth now of thee! And prepare to answer thou me!* * * * None other than God, thy Redeemer, call-

eth for thee. None other than *He who hath the keys of death and hell addresseth you through one of your number!*"

This claim, as clearly set forth, was tacitly acknowledged, or enthusiastically supported, by most of the members of the circle; and there was no opposition, for a time, to the decrees, directions and advices, which were given by means of Mr. Scott, as the rules of action by the circle. And very soon requisitions were made which were well calculated to try the faith of the members. They were no less than demands upon the believers to relinquish their possession and control of all pecuniary means to the direction of what claimed to be God, *through Mr. Scott.* The following is a *verbatim* extract from the oracle which issued, through Mr. Scott, the above-noticed requirement, and which was addressed to believers in spiritualism everywhere:

"* * But while spirits operate from the interior, man in clay demandeth external benefit; and God supplieth by laws operating externally, and external means conducted by external stewards, chosen for external purposes. He hath, therefore, aforetime, committed to your charge, as His stewards, the means designed to be employed while conducting the external in the manifestation unto its consummation. And lo, now he cometh and calleth upon you, and *requireth the charge committed, with its improvement.* Whoso hath, and now consecrateth to this great work, to him shall be given, and he shall have more in abundance; to him who holdeth in his hands the gifts of God, and hath not occupied for His glory, and is wanting in disposition to render back to the Author of all blessing, from him the spirit departeth, and shall be taken even that which he hath; for the earth and the substance thereof is the Lord's, and in the redemption He establishes thereon His kingdom. Hence, His will shall be done on earth as by angels in heaven. Come, then, to the mountain with thy substance. *Give it to the Lord*, who calleth thee; for He now provideth a feast of fat things, which shall be

unto all people, and proceedeth to remove, by the immortalizing procedure, the veil of mortality, cast, through sin, over all nations."

In addition to this general requirement, there were several epistles to the same effect, issued especially to individuals in different parts of the country, who were known by Mr. Scott to be favorable to the movement. And it was generally taught and understood that all who should become members of the community were to resign their stewardship into the hands of Deity, to be disposed of as should be dictated through Mr. Scott.

While the claimed inspiration continued apparently consistent with itself, and maintained a character similar to that of the old prophets in the Bible, which it endeavored assiduously to imitate, believers in that place were pretty generally disposed to accede to its demands. But inconsistencies began to appear to a few, before the lapse of many weeks; and, although a majority persisted in their faith, several individuals soon became firmly convinced of the falsity of the principal claims, and in about three months a number of families withdrew from the circle. One of the wealthiest of those who abandoned the cause had purchased a farm of six hundred acres, in pursuance of the directions given through Mr. Scott; but when he discovered that he had been following the dictation of an intelligence far from being divine, not yet having come into possession of the estate, he refused to complete the contract, and paid a large forfeit to be released from the engagement. Another individual, of more limited means, actually purchased and came into the possession of a farm before he became convinced that he had acted for a character undivine; and, as the locality under its existing circumstances was very distasteful, he determined to dispose of the property, — which he finally succeeded in doing at a large sacrifice, — the new purchaser being a believer in Mr. Scott's inspiration, and acting according to its dictation. Other members, at this period, having become fully conscious that they had been deceived by the

intelligence (from whatever source) which guided the movement, withdrew from the locality, all of them with more or less pecuniary loss. Among those who removed was Mrs. Benedict.

Mr. Scott, with some half a dozen families, still remained; and in the spring of 1851 the community was augmented by a few families from different localities, among whom were Mr. Harris and lady.

The following epistle was issued by Scott and Harris at Mountain Cove, and sent to the circle in Auburn, N. Y. It will be seen that it sets up the claim of infallibility in pretty plain terms.

"*The Circle of Apostles and Prophets to the Auburn Circle of Disciples.*

"DEAR BRETHREN: The especially appointed and commissioned spirits, through whom superior wisdom has approached and instructed mortals, dictate unto you the present epistle in the light of understanding, in the purpose of counsel, and in the desire of harmonious interprocedure of love. They review their works, declare their directed purposes, and seek to guide your feet in the way of peace.

"In the ninth month of the year 1850, common diurnal time, Ann, the medium for audible vibrations, journeyed from Auburn to Brooklyn, in obedience to our urgent and repeated directions, and was sent by us to the abode of James L. Scott. The purposed result of this mission was not permitted to be revealed to mortals, being hidden from all until disclosed by the fulfilment thereof.

"Having conducted the medium to her appointed destination, and having given unto the mortals whom we were specially appointed to approach — namely, to James L. Scott and Thomas L. Harris — satisfactory evidence of our identity and appointment, we proceeded as messengers of the SUPREME SPIRIT to communicate His will and purpose unto them, and this was a command requiring their consecration to the work of proclaiming divine truth as

disclosed in the Holy Scriptures, and now reäffirmed by the spirits of the redeemed in this their special reäppearing.

"This command was vouchsafed unto them in a two-fold form; internally by an especial revelation and preparation of mind, and externally by communications given through the medium for audible vibrations. This command was issued conjointly to them, and not separately; for they were called and prepared to act as instruments of light in continuous unity of one mind and heart.

"Thus the Circle of Apostles and Prophets instrumentally gave to these their first commission, empowering them verbally to unfold the Word; and the spirit who called, assisted them in their infirmities, and in infinite mercy and condescension was pleased to accept their efforts to proclaim His will.

"In the twelfth month of the aforesaid year the Circle of Apostles and Prophets were commanded by Superior Wisdom to direct the minds aforesaid, together with the medium for vibrations, to a place of assemblage in Brooklyn.

"Prompt obedience being rendered to their direction, these all met together at the place appointed, and when the Lord Creator proceeded to order those events which are written first in the Book of Records then directed to be made, and which were afterwards read to those chosen from the Auburn Circle, and confirmed in their hearing by the Prophetic and Apostolic circles through the Apostolic Messenger, and finally published in part by command in the introductory article to Disclosures from the Interior, beginning at the ninth paragraph thereof.

"In these our dictated and recognized records, James L. Scott and Thomas L. Harris are styled vehicles of inspiration, provided for the transmission of truth from heaven to the external world. It is also written therein that these vehicles were specially provided and prepared for this end; that the apostles, martyrs and confessors, together with prophets, patriarchs and seers, lifted supplication for inspiration to pervade the chosen vehicles; that their prayers received response loud from the angelic messengers; that the glory of God filled the sanctuary, and that the voice of the

Lord Creator was audible therein, and gave answer favoring the supplication.

"Thus, be it known, a further commission was given unto the mortals aforesaid, constituting them in unity as the organ of inspired communication from the celestial sphere. In order that this their work might be accomplished, their minds were blended by supernatural influence, and thus made one adapted vehicle for transmission of truth absolute, and light, in confirmation and exposition of truth previously revealed from heaven to man.

"Through these mediums, by a process which no mind uninspired can analyze, 'Disclosures from the Interior' have begun, unfolded in 'Superior care for mortals,' and transmitted to the external world. So perfect has been the established union of the vehicles thus constituted, that external distance, however great, has never been sufficient to prevent their harmonious movement and coöperation.

"Moreover, the Circle of Apostles and Prophets have had charge concerning them, and have instrumentally defended them against the influence of evil interior since the beginning of their labor to the present time.

"All elements of truth published in said Disclosures have therefore been received from our minds by these appointed vehicles of inspiration; the Circle of Apostles and Prophets having made use of the medium for vibratory sounds as an instrument of external aid and confirmation, and, as we from the beginning indicated, aid from vibrations decreased with the increase of inspiration, until vibratory sounds were used only for confirmation of wisdom revealed through the superior form. Thus the disclosures were given through chosen mediums by inspiration, even as the divine counsel was received of old.

"The Circle of Apostles and Prophets do finally declare that in the eighth month of the year 1851, common diurnal time, the word of the Lord came unto them, commanding disclosure of his most holy will concerning the establishment of terrestrial centre

for the unfolding of his heavenly kingdom, and a refuge for his obedient people.

"This disclosure was given by direction absolute from the interior through the appointed vehicles therefor, and is embraced in the 'Call to the Mountain,' addressing first all of the obedient, and, second, the two united vehicles of inspiration, as the especially chosen, unto whom was given increase of direction, guiding them to the boundaries of the Land where the Lord established the reign of peace.

"In obedience to our instructions, we guided James, the medium, unto the place appointed, and have established upon this mountain the standard of the cross, as a sign for the gathering of the obedient people.

"In further fulfilment of our charge we have guided Thomas the medium, to the appointed place, and have disclosed unto his mind full evidence of his associate medium's faithfulness in all the work given unto him to do; and also that all discord within the boundaries of the place appointed is caused by the presence of the unsanctified, and subsides with their removal therefrom.

"Having thus guided the vehicles of communication to the place directed by His most holy will, and united them thereupon the Spirit, who deviseth and establisheth the Redeeming Procedure, issueth commandment unto us His messengers to resume the disclosure of His truth without delay, that His name may thereby be glorified, His people instructed and comforted, and His compassionate and loving kindness, in accordance with the purpose in the consummation of His procedure, be manifest unto the earth and the inhabitants thereof.

"Dictated at Mountain Cove, Fifth Month, 1852."

I have endeavored, from every source, to obtain accurate information and give an impartial history of this singular movement. From an acquaintance, who was induced to join the movement, and spent a long time at the Cove, I have received a statement, of which the following is the substance:

Mr. Scott and others arrived in Fayette county, Virginia, in the month of October, 1851, for the purpose of establishing the community of true believers in Spiritualism, with Scott at the head. It was stated and understood before any of the company left Auburn that the land, when purchased, would be sold in small quantities to all who wished to settle with them, and those unable to purchase house and land would be furnished by the association. They also were promised business, such as each was able and willing to perform, each family to be their own household governor and regulator as fully as out of the association. The labor performed was to be paid for at a fair remuneration. Schools were to be established, and different branches of business instituted, so that the company might manufacture and produce all that is necessary for their subsistence, comfort and happiness. It was also understood that there was to be no dictator in the movement; but the whole was to be under direction of the spirits, and that all things should be governed on the principles of brotherhood, unity and equality. On the second day of December, 1851, — the day on which my informant arrived at Mountain Cove, Mr. Scott and some sixty others were on the ground. The information he received was that all was peace and harmony in the chosen mountain. He was told by Scott, who had somehow taken or been given the title of "doctor," that he was then receiving communications direct from the Deity. Scott declared that he received these communications standing face to face with God! and, strange as it may appear, most of the people there convened believed the story. Soon after this, Scott informed the people that he had been appointed by high spiritual power *medium absolute*, and that nothing but truth would or could be given through him; and that whatever was given through him must not be doubted, all doubting being rank heresy. Soon after this, Scott informed Mr. H. (my informant) that there had been a serious quarrel among them before he (Mr. H.) arrived. To the question as to what was the cause of the quarrel, he replied that a certain individual had slandered his character in saying that he (Scott) was guilty of

licentiousness and adultery. Mr. H. replied that the matter ought at once to be investigated. A meeting was accordingly called, professedly for that purpose. There were but few persons at the meeting, and, as soon as it was organized, Scott professed to pass into the "superior" or clairvoyant state, and said: "We (himself and his particular friends) must stand firm, and say nothing, unless the enemy makes the attack." And this ended the investigation into the charges of licentiousness against Rev. Mr. Scott. Those who had first made the charge continued it; but no other "investigation" was ever instituted. Strife and contention continued from this time to distract the "harmonious" mount.

In February, 1852, the plantation originally purchased was returned to the person from whom it was bought, as the payments on it could not be met. At this time several families left the place on account of the contention and want of confidence in the movement. In this emergency a meeting was called, and Scott passed into the "superior" state, and received the following spiritual communication: "James must go to New York, to seek new minds to carry on the Lord's work." The "James," of course, was himself. In accordance with his own direction — claiming to be spiritual — he went to the city of New York and Brooklyn, and, with the aid of Rev. Thomas L. Harris, succeeded in inducing several persons of property to engage in the enterprise. Being thus provided with funds, and empowered so to do, Scott returned and repurchased the Cove property, which they had surrendered in February. About the first of May, 1852, T. L. Harris and family, and several other families, arrived at the new Jerusalem. It should be mentioned, in this place, that, as soon as Scott returned from his mission to New York, he assumed a tone of authority, and was very arbitrary in his orders, declaring that the people should work to the line and plummet; and that those who were there and did not sympathize with his views should leave the place. This latter command was carried out, and the persons obnoxious to him were sent away — banished!

On the arrival of Mr. Harris a new era in the spiritual affairs of the community commenced. It was announced that Harris and Scott were the chosen mediums through which the Lord would communicate to man on earth, and that all other mediums would be silenced, or would become the channels of communication for deceptive and lying spirits, claiming for themselves infallibility and "truth absolute" direct from heaven. (See letter of Harris and Scott to Auburn circle.)

Harris declared that the house occupied by them (Harris and Scott) was "the house of God;" and that Mountain Cove was the "gate to heaven," and that there the redemption of man on earth would commence, and that all who opposed them — the two perfect prophets — would be driven from the mountain, from which there would be no redemption.

Some time during the summer of 1852 it was declared that the spirits, through Harris and Scott, had announced to the faithful that a certain piece of land, within a certain boundary, containing the Cove buildings, must be "leased to the Lord as his heritage." Accordingly, the "faithful" assembled, and the spirits (through Harris and Scott) directed the lease to be made in the name of J. L. Scott and T. L. Harris, as the Lord's chosen, and the lease was accordingly executed in their illustrious names.

The "Lord and his chosen people" being secured in the lease, a series of persecutions were commenced against all who did not agree with the assumed "perfect mediums." Slander, discord and contention, were rife, and harmony was unknown among the "chosen" people.

In the fall of 1852 Scott and Harris proclaimed that they were the two witnesses spoken of in the eleventh chapter of Revelation, and that they possessed the power, in its fullest extent, as described in that chapter.

Strange as it may appear, they found adherents and firm believers in this declaration. The believers were kept in awe of these self-appointed "anointed of the Lord" by the constant

asserting of this awful power. In one of his prayers, Mr. Harris says: "O, Lord, thou knowest that we do not wish to destroy man *with fire from our mouths!*"

This state of discord continued, until one after another, becoming disgusted with the arbitrary assumption of power and holiness on the part of the dictators, left the Cove to the few fanatical and credulous dupes of designing men, until the final dispersion of the whole community a few months after. It adds another to the numerous wild schemes conceived in the spirit of religious fanaticism, and born of the spiritual excitement which was made a convenient hobby for men who had graduated through the old forms of theological mysticism, until there was nothing new in that field to feed their love of leadership and pretence to special calls and inspiration.

CHAPTER VII.

MANIFESTATIONS AT STRATFORD, CONN., IN THE HOUSE OF REV. ELIAKIM PHELPS, D. D. — REMARKABLE EXHIBITIONS OF POWER — SINGULAR OCCURRENCES — IMAGE-MAKING — DESTRUCTION OF FURNITURE — INCENDIARY SPIRITS — THE SPIRITS IDENTIFIED — UNHAPPY SPIRITS, FROM THE REMEMBRANCE OF WRONG DONE IN THIS WORLD — WRONG-DOING REVEALED — DIRECTIONS GIVEN FOR RESTORING ILL-GOTTEN GAINS — DISCONTINUANCE OF THE MANIFESTATIONS.

WHILE these strange occurrences were taking place at Rochester and Auburn, and the press and people were busy in trying to account for them on strictly mundane principles, making all manner of insinuations against the character and motives of those who even dared to investigate for themselves, some manifestations took place at Stratford, Conn., which attracted attention to that quarter, as well on account of the character and standing of the gentleman at whose house they occurred, as the very strange, boisterous, and violent character of the manifestations. I have been allowed to examine all the records kept of the occurrences by Dr. Phelps, and shall be able, therefore, to present the history with more minuteness and accuracy than has ever before appeared.

The first disturbances took place on the tenth day of March, 1850, at the house of Rev. Eliakim Phelps, D. D. The house had been occupied by him from the 22d of February, 1848. It is a large and genteel country mansion, separated from the street by a fence forty-five feet in front of the house; which is thirty-two feet in front, and, including the piazza, seventy feet deep, with a hall thirteen feet wide, running through the whole depth of the building. Adjoining, and opening from this hall are two parlors

and a dining-room. On the second floor are five sleeping-rooms, and on the third floor two. The kitchen is in the basement. The house was built about the year 1829 or 30 by a Captain Dondall, who for several years commanded a vessel in the China trade, and who died in the bay of Canton within two or three years after his family had taken up their residence in the house. The property then passed into the hands of another sea-captain, by the name of Purcell, who, with his family, occupied it for several years. Capt. Purcell dying suddenly in New York, the family removed, and the house was occupied by an Episcopal clergyman for a school a year or more, and afterwards by a Mr. ———, also as a school for boys.

None of the families who had thus far occupied the house had ever been disturbed, or witnessed anything aside from ordinary events. At the death of Capt. Purcell it became the property of the two daughters, of whom Dr. Phelps purchased it during the month of November, 1847. For two years previous to this it had been unoccupied. Dr. Phelps and family commenced their residence therein on the 22d of February, 1848. Nothing occurred to excite the attention of the family out of the ordinary course of events until the tenth of March, 1850; and, as before stated, nothing can be learned of any strange or unusual events occurring there previous to that time. It will be observed by the dates given that Dr. Phelps had occupied the house more than two years, had found it an agreeable and quiet place of residence — having never himself or any member of the family been disturbed or alarmed by unusual occurrences. On the tenth of March, as above stated, it being the Sabbath, Dr. Phelps and family, consisting of Mrs. Phelps, two daughters and two sons, the eldest a daughter aged sixteen, a son of twelve years, and a second daughter of six years, children of Mrs. Phelps by a former marriage, and another son of Dr. Phelps by the present marriage, not then three years old, all attended church; and an Irish servant girl, who had been employed in the family some six months, and had shown herself to be honest and trustworthy, had gone on that day

to Bridgeport, to attend the Catholic Church. On leaving the house in the morning it appears that the doctor had secured the chamber doors, and put the keys in his pocket; those which could be were locked inside and the keys left in them. The only door by which the chambers could be entered was locked, and the key taken by Dr. Phelps. He also locked the front door inside, left the key in the lock, and, passing out at the back door, locked that and placed the key in his pocket. On returning from church at noon the front door was found standing open; the chamber doors, which were left fastened, were now open; and in the nursery the furniture was thrown about in disorder; chairs on the bed, and thrown down upon the floor; the shovel, tongs and poker, with other things, were in unusual positions and places, everything showing unmistakable signs of the work of some rude hand making mischief in their absence. Upon discovering the disorder here Dr. Phelps passed into other rooms on the same floor, but could see no further evidence of intrusion. The first supposition was, very naturally, that some person or persons had entered and robbed the house. Search was immediately made in the closets where silver plate, spoons, forks, etc., were kept. All were found safe and undisturbed. A gold watch, left in an exposed place, remained there as left. The impression still remained that burglars had been in; and, on examination of the windows, one was found that could be raised from the outside, and though there was no evidence of entrance having been made there, no doubt existed that this was the place of access. Thinking they might return during the afternoon, Dr. Phelps remained at home, the other members of the family going again to church. Being left alone the doctor armed himself, and, selecting a secluded position, awaited the return of the burglars. There was no disturbance during the afternoon; no sound of footfall; all remained quiet. On the return of the family, after the service, usually closing at three o'clock, several other articles were found out of place, but not in a way to make it certain that they were not moved in the morning. Articles of kitchen furniture were changed about. A

teakettle, which had been used at dinner-time, was found hidden behind some boxes in the cellar. The bread, sugar-bowl, eggs, and numerous other things kept in the kitchen, were found where they did not belong, and where they had evidently been placed in some way which the family could not account for. Upon entering the middle chamber, occupied as a sleeping-room, a sheet was found spread over the bed outside the counterpane, and beneath which was a nightgown and *chemise* laid out with the arms folded across the breast, with stockings placed in a position to represent, as it seemed, a corpse disposed as is usual before placing it in the coffin. On the wall were written characters resembling those said by certain clairvoyants to belong to a spiritual language, but which none of the family were able to decipher. Whether they had any significance, or how they came there, was alike an unanswerable question by the family; they had not observed them before. Occurrences ceased for that day and night, yet, no one thinking of any mystery in the matter, they imputed it to roguish boys, or others, who had effected entrance with false keys, for mischief, rather than for robbery, and that the culprits would soon be detected. The next morning, March 11th, when the family went up stairs, after breakfast, the middle chamber had again been visited, exhibiting much the same scene of disorder presented the previous day. A sheet was spread out upon the floor, the wash-stand laid upon its back upon the sheet, a candle-stick set upon the stand, the wash-bowl placed upon one side, and the pitcher on the other. The nightgown and chemise, used on the previous occasion to represent a dead body, were found one in the bowl, the other in the pitcher. It appears that these articles of clothing were not then in use; they had been placed in a trunk which stood in a closet adjoining that room. They were replaced in the trunk when removed from the bed the day before. As they were conversing in relation to the disposition of the things as above stated, Mrs. Phelps looked under the bed, and discovered articles there, partially concealed by the bed, resembling those in question. They were taken out and pronounced to be the same.

Dr. Phelps had not before examined them, but then took them, noted the name and number on each, as they were marked, folded and placed them again in the trunk, remarking that he would put them where they would stay; did not lock the trunk, not having a key, but locked the closet and placed the key about his own person; then requesting the family to all leave the room first, which they did, the doctor, following, locked the door of the room, and kept the key. Having observed that Mrs. Phelps seemed a little troubled as to the mystery, he thought to convince her that there was no mystery in the matter, and, having secured the closet and room, he descended to the rooms below, following them all. After the lapse of some fifteen minutes, some person spoke to the doctor, upon which he went up to the chambers. At the head of the stairs, out in the hall, he found the same articles which he had left as before stated. He examined them, and was *positive they were the same.* He went to the door; found it locked; entered by applying the key from his pocket; went to the closet; found it locked; took the key from his pocket; opened the door; looked in the trunk; and the articles were gone! Dr. Phelps states that he was confident there was no deception in the case, and that he then, for the first, felt that there was a mystery about the affair. He had never believed in the appearing of ghosts, or departed spirits, warnings, or anything of that nature, and, at the age of three-score, had never seen or heard anything connected with that class of phenomena. The evidence upon which such superstitions, as he termed them, rest, he had never examined, and while he had no proof positive that they were impossible, and never did occur, he had no evidence to found a belief upon that they ever had. His idea of spiritual manifestations seems to have been that most, if not all, followed by a strict scrutiny, might be accounted for on natural or known principles, or some physical means, which would disrobe them of the mysterious altogether. But it was not to rest here. On the same day (March 11th) the moving and throwing of furniture commenced. An umbrella, standing at the end of the hall, leaped, without visible

assistance, a distance of, at least, twenty-five feet. Dr. Phelps saw the movement, and knows there was no perceptible agency by which the motion was produced. A bucket, standing at the head of the stairs, was thrown into the entry below. Smaller articles, such as nails, forks, knives, spoons, bits of tin, iron and keys, were thrown from different directions about the house. He says, "There were times when they came from such directions that they *might* have been thrown by some person in the house,"—at least, that may be admitted,—but in very many cases the motion and point of starting were such as to preclude all possibility of deception on the part of persons in the rooms. During the afternoon Dr. and Mrs. Phelps had occasion to go to Bridgeport; a distance of some three miles. During their absence the shovel and tongs, standing in the dining-room, were thrown violently down the basement stairs; a piece of mourning crape fastened to the knocker of the back door, and the mirrors in the front chambers covered with sheets and table-cloths, as is the custom in some parts of the country while a person lies dead in the house. The crape on the door Dr. Phelps did not see, but the covering on the mirrors he removed with his own hands. The position of the mirrors in one room was such that the coverings could not, without great difficulty, have been placed there by any person about the house. Various articles were said to have been thrown about the room—the phenomena continuing in his absence about the same as when he was present in the fore part of the day. Soon after sundown all was again quiet, and so continued through the night.

The next morning (March 12th) soon after the family were up, the same phenomena began again; knives, forks, spoons, blocks of wood, nails, etc. etc., were thrown from different directions, and with increased frequency, attended by still stranger circumstances, and those of a still more mysterious character. Mrs. Phelps expressed some alarm, and a wish that some of the neighbors might be called in. Dr. Phelps called on a retired clergyman of Stratford, a man of extensive information, much experience and sound judgment, who was universally admitted to be capable of rendering

correct judgment and good advice in such a case. He requested him to call and spend an hour at the house, to which he cheerfully consented. Dr. P. told him that his family had been a little excited by some occurrences in the house, but did not state any of the details of the matter, but desired that he would sit with them for a short time and witness for himself. He remained all day, but was, at first, firmly of the opinion that the occurrences were produced, in some way, through the agency of the girl, or some other person about the house, and his main attention was directed to the girl in the kitchen, or the children, in the expectation that he should detect them in doing it.

The door leading from the parlors to the kitchen was, by his request, locked, and all communication between it and the other parts of the house cut off; still, the throwing of articles went on as before. The children were sent out of the room, and the doors locked; but this made no difference. He stayed through most of the day on Thursday, and returned soon after breakfast next morning, and remained most of the time for nearly three weeks. He became satisfied, before the close of the second day, that neither the girl in the kitchen nor the children had any agency in producing the strange movements. During the day (March 12th) some of the neighbors were in the house, and small blocks of wood were seen to fall in different places in their presence; but only one person noticed them in a way to excite inquiry, and that person was requested not to mention what she had seen.

On Wednesday, March 13th, the manifestations commenced early in the morning, in the middle chamber, the room in which two children slept, and began while they were both asleep. A book, standing in the library, ten or twelve feet from the bed, leaped from the shelf into the middle of the room. The blower, which was in the grate, leaped out on the floor, a distance of at least six feet, the noise of which first awakened the children. At the breakfast-table several articles were thrown; among them a large potato, which had been sent from Pennsylvania, and laid up in a closet in the east chamber, fell on the table directly by

the side of Dr. P.'s plate, in a manner that no person could have done it without instant detection. The doctor's curiosity was much excited, and he watched, with all the scrutiny he was capable, every person in the room. He took up the potato and let it fall from different heights, in order to determine how far it must have fallen to have made the concussion that it did; and it was adjudged by all that the distance could not have been more than twelve or fifteen inches.

Rev. Mr. —— came in soon after breakfast, and remained during the day. Several Bibles were opened at different passages, which seemed to be selected with a great deal of care, and indicated either by placing small pieces of paper on them or turning down a leaf. These things first occurred in the middle chamber where the library stood. While the family were at dinner similar things were done in the parlor adjoining the dining-room. Two Bibles and an Episcopal prayer-book were opened at different passages, chairs turned forward on the floor, two solar lamps placed on the floor, a hat and man's cap put one on each; nearly everything in the room had been moved, and in so *short a time*, that it seems wholly inadmissible that any person about the house could have done it; besides, the whole household were in the dining-room, all seated at the table, except the servant, and she was employed waiting on the table.

In the afternoon the demonstrations were confined to the middle parlor. Dr. and Mrs. Phelps, and Mr. ——, and a part of the time the eldest daughter, being present; in the absence of the daughter the doors were locked, and the three first named only were present.

The throwing of various things occupied the afternoon. The articles thrown were picked up and placed upon the mantle, and between the hours of one and four o'clock, the number amounted to forty-six; among which were nails, bits of tin, iron, keys, and small blocks, all of which were gathered from different parts of the house; most of them from closets on the second floor, and the chambers. At one time, while Mr. M—— was standing near the

centre of the room, a padlock, which was known to have been in the closet of the middle chamber, fell at his feet. He took it in his hand, letting it fall from different hights, to discover the probable distance it must have fallen to produce the concussion. After various trials it was judged to have fallen not more than two or two and a half feet. As Dr. P. was sitting, perhaps ten feet from the piano-forte, he saw a small toy-mouse, which was on the piano, arise as if tossed, and, describing a parabola as it came, fall at his side, so near that he took it from the floor without leaving his chair. This he speaks of seeing as distinctly as he ever saw anything, the whole being perfectly in his view. He also saw, in the same way, among other things, a nail, cotton-spool and key, arise from behind the sofa, which stood diagonally across the corner of the room. He arose, went to the sofa, looking behind and under it, but could discover nothing which might give impulse to the articles. While examining the carpet about the sofa to find if any other things were there, without success, as his eyes were directed to one spot, there arose from that very point a piece of cheese-rind, perhaps eight inches from the floor; when he saw it first, it arose four or five feet, passed over the sofa, and fell on the floor. He is positive it was not there when he was looking at the carpet, and knows there were no visible means of its moving.

Mr. M—— suggested, as he was about to leave on Wednesday night, that if the strange phenomena should return, he would like to have some other persons called in. Early the next morning, Thursday the 14th, the manifestations commenced about as they had on the previous day. Soon after breakfast a sheet was found spread upon the floor, several Bibles were opened at different places, the candlesticks, in a row, the highest in the middle, and covered with a sheet; other articles changed about the room, without any seeming design, more than to attract attention. Mr. M—— proposed that notes be despatched to Rev. Mr. W——, congregational minister, and Mr. Plant, a lawyer of high standing and respectability, which was accordingly done. It was at this

time that they first began to hear rappings and heavy poundings. A loud sound, like some person striking the floor with some heavy substance, was heard, generally in the middle chamber. This was usually done when no one was in the chamber, and on any one entering all was still. In one instance a chair was seen to rise from the floor and beat down again, five or six times, with a violence which caused the house to tremble so as to be felt in all the adjoining apartments. A large plated candlestick, standing on the mantle, was moved by some unseen power to the floor, and then rose up and down, beating the floor, until the candlestick was broken. This was the first article that was damaged about the house. Several times, during the day, loud noises, like some one pounding with an axe, or some heavy substance, on the floor, were heard in different parts of the house, and several times the loud poundings terminated with a frightful scream; it was not a cry of distress, or anything that could be easily imitated, seeming like something between the cry of a cat and the bleating of a calf, but louder than either. These sounds occurred, in all, probably twenty times while the manifestations were going on. Sometimes the screams seemed to be in the third story, sometimes in the front-hall chamber, several times out in the yard, and occasionally in other places. There was, at no time, any audible expression of words. The sounds consisted of poundings, knockings, and screamings. On this day the first images were found, which will be spoken of more fully hereafter.

In the evening of this day, just after some young ladies had called, Dr. P.'s daughter returned to the parlor, it being between nine and ten o'clock. After seeing the young ladies to the door, an iron stand, in which stood the fire-shovel, tongs and poker, leaped from the hearth, where it stood, into the middle of the floor, and rose up and beat the floor with a force that made a jar that could be felt, and the sound heard, in any part of the house. This was seen only by the daughter, but Dr. P. and wife heard the noise. The daughter ran through the dining-room to get up stairs, and, as she passed, a large table was standing, with the

other furniture, arranged for breakfast the next morning. The table was three feet nine inches wide, and five feet three inches long, made of solid mahogany; and when she entered the room it rose up and beat five or six times against the floor with a force which made the house jar. The noise was heard by many persons in the house. Mrs. P. was alarmed, and screamed out, "O, take me from this place!" This happened between nine and ten o'clock, P. M. Previous to this time, all manifestations had ceased by sundown, or a little after.

Soon after daylight on Friday, March 15th, movements similar to those on previous days commenced. Henry, a lad then eleven and a half years of age, attended the academy, and nothing had, thus far, ever occurred to connect these strange phenomena with his presence. Dr. P. had never heard or thought of particular persons being "mediums." But on this day the remarkable occurrences seemed to be connected more or less with this boy. His cap was torn on his head, so as to be entirely destroyed. Another one which he put on was taken in the same way. First a small hole opened in the crown; this gradually extended, and in a short time it was torn into many pieces. On another cap characters were made; apparently with chalk. They resembled those sometimes made by persons in the higher mesmeric state, describing them as characters of a spiritual language.

Five or six of these characters were, at one time, made on the boy's cap. Others, supposed to constitute a sentence, were written on a red pocket-handkerchief; others on his pantaloons and coat, and on the *inside* of his sack-coat. Copies of these characters were taken with great care, and were preserved till September following, when they were mysteriously destroyed. From this time it became evident that some of the phenomena had some kind of connection with this boy.

An umbrella, which he was carrying, was, in a mysterious manner, torn in several pieces. His pantaloons were torn from the bottom upwards, as high as the knee, and sometimes higher, and were literally torn to ribbons, an inch or more wide. This occurred

several times under the immediate inspection of Rev. Mr. M., which seems to fix the fact that, in those instances at least, no power visible did it. Thus it continued for several weeks, clothing to the amount of twenty dollars being destroyed. At one time, while he was riding in a carriage with Dr. P., his cap on his head was torn in a mysterious manner, and his pants torn from the waistband to the bottom, in a way that no human power could have done. Dr. P. heard them torn, but could see nothing doing it, and knows the boy could not have done it himself. It was on this day, March 15th, that images, dressed in articles of clothing, were again seen; only two or three appeared on that day. The most extraordinary occurrences of this kind took place on Saturday, the 16th. Soon after breakfast two or three images appeared in the middle chamber; soon again another, followed by others still, numbering in all eleven or twelve. They were formed of articles of clothing, found about the house, stuffed to resemble the human figure. A lady's dress would be stuffed in some cases with a muff; again with a pillow, and sometimes with other dresses; a bonnet and shoes were aptly placed to complete the figure. These, on this occasion, all but one, represented females in the attitude of devotion, some having Bibles or prayer-books placed before them. One, formed of Mrs. P.'s dress, so much resembled the real, that the little boy, scarce three years old, coming into the room with his sister, older, whispered, "Be still, ma is saying prayers."

A portable writing-desk, usually standing on the secretary in the room, was taken and placed upon the floor, a towel spread over it, and the image of a child kneeling beside it. A Yankee clock was taken from the mantle in the nursery, and placed upon the floor in the middle room, a distance of twenty feet, and so carefully done that the clock was still going when discovered in its new place, though it stopped some time after. It does not appear that any of these images were seen in the process of construction, or that the clothing, which was gathered from different localities, was seen in the act of moving. When persons entered

the room everything was still, the clothing about the floor, which, upon going again within a few minutes, were found wrought into forms. The marked rapidity of their construction, and the life-like appearance of them, seems to have been truly wonderful. During this day several others than members of the family were present. In several instances, when the rooms were closed and the doors guarded, so that no person could enter, the images were constructed. To one reading or listening to the relation of these facts, the mischief and cunning evinced will seem amusing as well as most wonderful; but to the family who bore the annoyance and witnessed the terrifying demonstrations, it was a serious and trying affair.

The reader will keep in mind that this was on Saturday of the first week of these strange proceedings, and many persons were still believing that they must be produced by some one in the house; every member of the family therefore was subjected to the most rigid scrutiny, which makes it morally certain that no member of the household could have had any agency in the matter without being at once detected. Besides the neatness and despatch with which they were formed, the natural appearance of most of them must have required taste and skill beyond the conception of ordinary persons in the flesh. Mr. M. remained there throughout the day, Mr. W., Governor Plant and Captain S., a part of the day. During the day and evening various things were thrown in different parts of the house. A brick-bat, which lay on the stairs leading to the third story, was thrown violently down stairs, passing very near the head of the eldest daughter as she was descending the stairs. A fire-shovel was also thrown near her, which she first saw high above her in a position to fall upon her head. She was several times constrained to cry out from fear, so much as to cause apprehension on her account.

[I omit, in this place, at the request of Dr. Phelps, a minute account of occurrences in which the medium seemed to be one who has now grown to be a young woman, and would feel a repugnance at having her name mentioned in connection wi

the subject. At one time a ribbon was tied around her neck, while she was sleeping, so tight as to cause a serious affection of the brain. Dr. Phelps was sitting in the room when it was done. Several other remarkable occurrences are omitted, on account of her connection with them. In the main they do not differ materially in their nature from the occurrences herein related.]

The hiding of hats, caps, clothing, &c., seems at this time to have become of common occurrence. On several occasions a hat was seen to go up stairs — not thrown, but seemed to be carried rapidly by unseen hands. For several days Dr. P. was forced to keep his hat under lock and key to prevent its disappearance, if left out as usual. Coats, hats and canes of gentlemen, who were strangers in the house, were spirited away; the only object seeming to be the gratification of mischievous desires, with the exception of a few instances. They were found sometimes in the chimney, under the bed, and in the bottom of trunks. The design seemed to be to detain the owners to witness further demonstrations. Two gentlemen from an adjoining town called, one of whom had expressed an earnest desire to witness the phenomena; but having passed several hours, and seen nothing, they were about to leave, when the person who expressed the wish found himself minus a hat. A thorough searching followed, but no hat could be found, consequently the gentleman decided to remain until the next day. During the evening and night, phenomena transpired sufficient to gratify his most abundant desire. Similar cases, with like results, afterwards occurred.

On the nineteenth and twentieth, little occurred to cause alarm. Some of the family heard loud and frightful screams in an adjacent out-house, which must have been torturing to the feelings, much more so than the silent images. Small articles were also thrown about the house. Reports had now got abroad, and some excitement was being produced, as is always the case in country towns, where each person knows their neighbor's private business quite as well, and sometimes better, than those most interested. And in a matter of this kind all efforts to prevent publicity would

prove unavailing. Curiosity and staring wonder would overstep all bounds of propriety and respect for the private rights and feelings of the family, forgetting that it is no slight thing for the harmony and quiet of a household to be invaded, each member being subjected to suspicion, ill-natured scrutiny, or careless reproach. On this subject I can speak from experience, having myself passed the ordeal. To persons of refined sensibility it is a trial indeed. In this case, Dr. P. adopted the rule of giving all who called an opportunity to investigate for themselves, and to this rule he adhered, notwithstanding the annoyance such a constant visitation must have occasioned. In one instance, while a rabble was gathered outside, a stranger, who came unintroduced by letter or otherwise, asked to spend the night, and was refused for obvious reasons.

On Friday and Saturday, March 23d and 24th, the disturbances increased, and became still more annoying. Loud poundings and screams were heard in different places, and on Saturday evening, between sunset and dark, Harry was passing through the dining-room, and thought himself suddenly caught up by some unseen power from the floor, and supposed that he was about to be carried off through the ceiling. He was very much frightened, and screamed so as to alarm the family, and remained in a state of great nervous excitement for two or three hours, and the effects did not wholly wear off for more than a week. At times he was in such a state as to require two men to hold him. For several days after this, he spent a portion of his time with one of the neighbors during the day; but the disturbances continued the same at the house, although he appeared to be more or less the medium as long as the phenomena continued. At one time he was thrown into a cistern of water; at another he was tied up and suspended from a tree, and several times was thrown into a state of apparent insensibility, in which he would remain from ten to fifty minutes, and for which no human cause could be assigned.

Somewhere about the 20th or 22d of March, Dr. P.'s attention

was called to a pamphlet (Capron and Barron's), giving a history of the "mysterious noises" at Rochester and Auburn. Several persons who had read the same proposed to question the agents of these disturbances in the manner there recorded, and see if they could get answers to questions. To this the doctor objected, for reasons known to himself, but which may readily be imagined by those knowing his position in life, and his general opinions of such phenomena.

On the 26th of March Anna left Stratford, and on the third of April Harry also left. No manifestations took place while both were away. Harry was absent a week, and Anna three weeks; but the very day that Harry returned, the manifestations commenced with greater power than ever. Even before he arrived at the house, a paper with some mysterious characters was dropped near the front door. These characters were interpreted by a clairvoyant* to read as follows:

> "Fear not when he returns; all danger is o'er.
> We came, we disturbed thy house; but shall no more.
> Believe us not evil or good till we prove
> Our speech to humanity, our language of love."

This was supposed to indicate that no further disturbance would be made; but in the course of two or three hours another paper was found in the boy's hat in these words:

> "The good ones say that all is done,
> But the wicked ones say it has just begun."

The "wicked ones," in this case, seemed to come nearer the truth than the "good ones," for, on the afternoon of the eighth of April, the breaking of glass commenced for the first time by the breaking of a pane in a mysterious manner. In the evening of the same day another was broken during family prayers, some of the pieces falling inside and some outside. There were no indications of anything being thrown against it.

* Andrew Jackson Davis.

From this time forward for several weeks glass was broken almost daily, until the whole number of panes broken amounted to *seventy-one* in the house and out-buildings. Most of them were broken by something being thrown against them; among the articles were a brush, a shoe, a poker, a fire-shovel, a candlestick, a pair of snuffers, books, and numerous other things; occasionally a stone or piece of brick, thrown from the outside.

Dr. P. thinks it would have been possible, but not probable, that, in some of these cases, they might have been broken by human agency, but he was an eye-witness in some twenty or thirty cases, and knows that they could not have been so done. He saw a brush, which he knew to have been on a certain shelf but a moment before, and no person near the shelf, fly to the window, break out a glass, and fall down between the shutter and sash, where he knew, from the position, that no one could have thrown it. He saw a tumbler, which was standing on a bureau, rise from its place, fly to the window, and dash out the only pane remaining whole in the window, when no person was within twenty feet of it, and the only persons in the room were himself and Harry, the latter standing by the doctor's side in the doorway of the room — a position in which it was utterly impossible for him to have done it without detection.

The mysterious visitors, whoever they were, seemed at times to be actuated by a spirit of sheer mischief in the destruction of property, particularly glass and crockery. Even the glass in the carriage-top was broken out. Pitchers of water were, on two or three occasions, poured into the beds, and the pitchers and other vessels thrown about the room and broken. The damage to furniture during the whole time was nearly two hundred dollars. Sometimes there was a cessation of "hostilities" for two or three days; but they would then return with additional violence; in fact they increased gradually in violence from the beginning to the middle of April. On the evening of that day, and during the night, they were more violent and destructive than ever before. On the night of the thirteenth of April, loud pounding and beating, as with

some hard substance, were frequent in the room adjoining that in which Dr. P. slept; so loud and continued were they, that at one o'clock no person in the house had been able to sleep. Soon after, a small drawer was taken from a dressing-table, and beaten so violently against the bedstead as to break it into fragments, some of which were thrown against the windows, breaking two panes of glass. The knockings were now transferred to Mrs. P.'s room. She was pinched, pricked with pins, and otherwise annoyed in a manner beyond explanation, "on any known laws of matter or mind." Mr. W. C. was staying in the house that night. He went to the room by request, and proposed to interrogate them, as they were then doing at Rochester and other places in western New York. Being left to act his pleasure, he queried, and was replied to as follows: "Who are you? If a spirit, knock." Immediately there were heard on the head of the bed distinct knocks. *Question.* — "Are you a good or bad spirit? If good, knock." To this there was no answering sound. "If a bad spirit, knock." At once the same sounds as before were heard. *Question.* —"Will you spell your name if the alphabet is called?" *Answer.*— Knock. It was done; and a name was spelled out, and a communication made of a most extraordinary character, detailing the particulars of a transaction in which a portion of the family were said to have been defrauded out of a large property. As this whole communication relates to a matter which may yet come before the tribunals of our country for adjudication, I am expressly prohibited from making any extracts from this part of the journal. I regret this more, as the facts in this case form one of the most wonderful and unaccountable cases on record.

The family concluded that, after these important disclosures were made, the disturbances would cease; but they were doomed to be disappointed. The following night no communications were made, but the throwing of articles and breaking of windows, crockery, etc., were renewed with greater violence than before. Four or five panes of glass were broken in one room in the space of half an hour. While the family were together in the east

chamber, a small sauce-dish, with an iron handle, rose from the floor, under the wash-stand, and beat against the bedstead with such violence as to break the handle off, and was then thrown back from whence it started. It beat seven or eight times against the bedstead, producing a noise that could easily be heard twenty rods. A round of a chair was beaten against the bedstead, in the same manner, when there was no person within seven or eight feet of it. A lamp that was on the mantel leaped into the middle of the floor, and was extinguished. Being left thus suddenly in the dark, produced no little agitation, and Mrs. Phelps proposed that they should take the children and go into the street, rather than stay in the house that night. In a few minutes two gentlemen, who had appointed to spend the night with them, arrived, and the more violent of the manifestations ceased.

About this time, Dr. P.'s attention was called to the fact that the demonstrations were much more violent in the presence of some persons than of others. While some were present they would cease entirely, and commence as soon as they left with great vehemence.

On the 17th the communications were renewed, and from that time they had frequent communications, mainly respecting the property affair. At one time they asked how they should know that this was really from the spirit it purported to be, and requested his signature; when in less than four minutes a small piece of paper having on it an exact fac simile of his handwriting was seen sticking to the wall — the writing apparently done with a pencil. Dr. Phelps still preserves the original paper with the name inked over. It was stuck to the wall by being made damp.

It was now discovered that, in order to get the rapping, the presence of Henry was necessary. At one time a request was made by the rapping to send him to New York, and a threat that all the windows in the house would be broken, if they did not, was made; but in a few minutes after, a small piece of paper was seen to fall, apparently from the ceiling, and on it written,

"Send him not to N. Y. — evil will befall him." It was evident that there were two or more contending agencies engaged in the manifestations. It was not easy to define or imagine what their objects were. At times, when one was making a communication the other would rap, seemingly to make confusion. At other times, when a communication was being made by alphabet, a paper would be dropped down, and on it written, "It is all a lie; don't believe what he says." Sometimes language the most profane, and occasionally, but rarely, obscene, would be written out in this way. Inquiry was made as to how these contradictory communications were to be accounted for, and the answer was that an opposing spirit was attempting to defeat the object of the first; that this spirit was now one of his tormentors; that both were in a state of misery, and his suffering would be mitigated if the object of the first could be accomplished, although he would never go to a state of happiness.

Among the spirits who communicated were two, who professed to be in a state of happiness, and three in a state of misery. One of the good spirits claimed to be a sister of him who made the first communication; she communicated frequently, and constantly manifested herself in the morning and evening devotions of the family, and always gave two distinct knocks at the utterance of "Amen." Upon inquiry as to the meaning of these two knocks, the answer was given that it was a response, after the manner of the Episcopal service, signifying that she joined in the devotions.

Much that was communicated after the first few days was of a trifling and childish character; some, more like what would be received from street rowdies than anything else. To the question why they destroyed property, they replied, "For fun." It was asked of the opposing spirit what could be done to afford him relief; he answered that "The best thing they could do would be to give him a piece of pie." Sometimes letters would come, purporting to be from ministers of Philadelphia, giving accounts of conversions in their congregations and additions to their churches. These were addressed to the Dr. and indicated a knowledge of

things in Philadelphia to an astonishing degree. Some of the letters were addressed to Mrs. Phelps, signed, or rather purporting to be signed, by departed spirits of persons who had lived in Philadelphia, and all, or nearly all, who had lived in a single square, and were the acquaintances of Mrs. Phelps, during a residence in that city, in the time of her former marriage. Sentimental notes were also addressed to the daughter. These letters and billets were frequent, amounting in all to nearly one hundred, and were all written in one hand, though purporting to come from different persons. The fact was at one time referred to, and an explanation desired, to which the following was given: "We do not write with the hand, — do not touch the pencil; we write with the will." At one time a paper was thrown down to Mrs. Phelps, while in the parlor with a number of ladies, having written on it, with a pencil, as follows:

"Sir: Sir Sambo's compliments, and begs the laddyes to accept as a token of esteem."

A lady in the family of Dr. Phelps had, in a humorous way, requested the spirits to write her a letter that she might send to a friend in Philadelphia. The spirit complied with the request by sending down the following:

"Dear Mary: I have just time to write and tell you I am well. Give my love to Miss K. and her uncle. Also to Mrs. and Mr. D. Also to Sarah. Good-bye. H. P. Devil."

The initials of the lady's name, who asked for the letter, were H. P.

Papers were also thrown down, signed "Beelzebub," and "Sam Slick." Sometimes names of persons, whom the family had known in Philadelphia, but who had been dead several years, were signed to these papers.

The following was in pencil, and seems to be written in the same hand as the other. It was superscribed "E. Phelps":

"If you promise not to write that I told you, I will not throw anything all this week."

On the 28th of July, 1850, two singular letters were thrown down, addressed to Dr. Phelps. They were both in one handwriting, but were signed by two different orthodox clergymen of Philadelphia. Their interest in religious movements, and their acquaintance with the phraseology of "revival" correspondence, are seen at a glance. "St. Peter's," in the second letter, is a Puseyite church.

"DEAR BROTHER: The Lord is dealing bountifully with his chosen people. Brother Barnes admitted to the church forty-nine last Sunday, and Brother Parker thirty-four to-day. Brother Converse has had the cholera, and Brother Fairchild has grown so fleshy as scarcely to be recognized. Our friend Mr. Tarr has buried his wife. She died of consumption. E. Tarr is married. Brother Mahu, being suddenly inspired last Sunday, spoke so eloquently and so loud, and used such majestic action, as to be quite done up for a while. He broke a blood-vessel. Old Tiers has gone crazy, and is shut up in a mad-house, or, rather, a hospital. The H——'s have gone into the country to spend some time. That 's all the news.

"Your faithful brother in Christ,

"R. A."

"DEAR BROTHER: The millennium truly is coming. The day of the Lord is at hand. We are adding countless numbers to the altar of the Lord. Brother A—— became inspired last Sunday, to such a degree, that his soul took its flight to the regions above, and has not yet returned. The Catholic churches, St. Joseph's and St. Mary's, were burned down; St. Peter's, also — I believe that is a Catholic church. Brother Mahu was preaching from the text, 'Resist the devil,' &c., when he was suddenly overturned by an invisible power, which frightened him so that his hair turned white in five minutes.

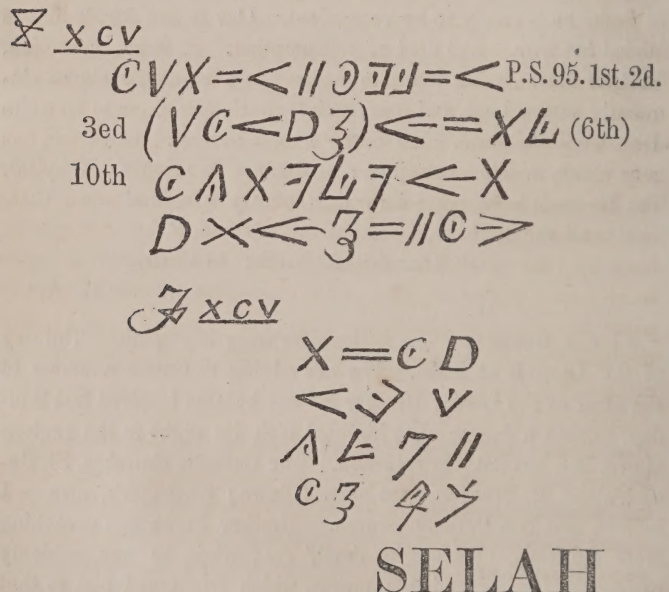
"Brother Barnes, to render his church more attractive, is going to have opera singing and dancing, every Sunday P. M. Mrs. Alexander Tower, old Mr. Tiers, Brother Fairchild, and Mrs.

Somerville, are going to dance. I think they will find it a very lucrative employment. Jane and Martha still progress in Hebrew. "Your affectionate brother,

"M. R."

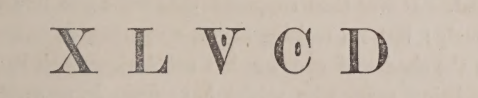
On Sunday, April 27th, 1851, on returning from church, the family found the following characters written on the last leaf of a writing-book, lying on the hall floor, although it was known to be in the nursery previous to their going away. None of the family had any knowledge of how the book got into the hall.

SPIRITUAL.



H. C. Gordon, a clairvoyant, interpreted the characters as follows: The first line, 95th Psalm, 2d verse; second line, 3d and 6th verse; and the third line, the 10th verse.

The following characters were found on the wall in the east chamber, on Sunday morning, May 4th, 1851. They were made with a candle on the wall near the south window.



This was translated to be, "Spirits of a higher order desire to communicate with you soon."

Spirit-writing, without visible human agency, has never been a common mode of communicating, although it was among the early occurrences at Hydesville, Rochester and Auburn.*

Sometimes these missives were enclosed in a book, and thrown down stairs or into the room; sometimes wrapped about a key or nail, or anything that would give a momentum, and thrown into the room. Often they were seen to fall from above; this occurring frequently when the doors were closed, and it was not possible for any visible agent to have been the cause. Writing would appear on the wall at times, made, as it appeared, with a pencil. On one occasion, Dr. Phelps was writing at his desk, and, turning his back for a few moments, without leaving his chair, turned again to his paper, where he found written in large letters, "Very nice paper and very nice ink for the devil." The ink was not yet dry, the desk was not two feet from him as he sat, and he was entirely alone in the room.

About the first of May, Dr. Phelps, of Boston, brother of the Rev. Doctor, and Prof. Phelps, of Andover, a son of the Rev. Doctor, went to Stratford to "expose the humbug;" and with a full belief that it was a trick of evil-minded persons, and that they should be able to detect and expose it without trouble; and they were disappointed, as hundreds have been under like circumstances. On Tuesday evening a loud rap was heard on the back

* Mr. Sunderland, in his "Book of Human Nature," p. 280, says this was the first of the spirit-writing, but he is in error. The author of this work was acquainted with cases of this kind long before the disturbances at Stratford.

door, seeming to be made by the knocker, loud enough to be heard twenty rods distant. The servant went to the door, but no person was there. After the lapse of five or eight minutes, the rap was repeated. It was then supposed that some one had done it mischievously; but, on looking about, no person was discovered. It was in the shades of evening, but not dark enough to prevent any person being seen, who might have done it, as easily as at midday. The knocking came the third time, when Dr. Phelps — the visitor — placed himself in the hall, perhaps four feet from the door, and the Professor, of Andover, took a position on the steps without, each having full view of the door. The same loud raps were repeated on the door between them. The knocker did not move, nor could the eye detect any cause for what met the ear. The noise was heard throughout the house, and both the gentlemen were positive that no visible agent was employed to produce it. About bed-time, a loud pounding was heard on the chamber door. The gentlemen, each with a candle in hand, stood on either side of the door, as the pounding, as though done with a heavy boot, was continued. The noise appeared to each to be on the side of the door opposite to him. On the following morning, as Dr. Phelps, of Stratford, was standing at the foot of the stairs leading to the third story, a noise as loud and much resembling the report of a pistol occurred apparently close to his ear. These boisterous sounds occurred at intervals during a great part of the time that the disturbance was continued. Sometimes for weeks they would not be heard; and again for days they were heard every day.

It would seem, from various occurrences, that the agents of these sounds, whoever they were, must have been human beings, or, at least, possessed of all the leading characteristics of humanity. They were evidently influenced by kindness or unkindness, by respect and confidence, as persons generally are in this life. Some instances, illustrating this, are given. One morning, during the breakfast hour, they would push the table suddenly, raise up one side and shake it in such a manner as to spill the coffee, and

otherwise occasion serious inconvenience. A person at the table spoke to them in a tone of authority, commanding them to desist; but the act was at once repeated. Again they were commanded to cease, but increased violence followed this command. This was five or six times repeated, and the shaking was each time renewed. At length another person at the table said, "I request you kindly to cease this annoyance, and allow us to take our breakfast quietly," and they ceased at once, without a repetition. It was found, from this time, that kindness had about the same effect upon them that it produces upon mankind at large. A lady, the wife of a clergyman, spent a few weeks in the family during the summer, who received many communications from them, would often, when the scissors, thimble, or things of that kind, were mislaid, say, "I will thank the spirits to return my thimble, scissors," or whatever was missing, and the article named would drop at her side, or in her lap, within a minute. Things of this kind occurred very many times in course of the time that these phenomena were continued. If a key or knife, or anything of the kind, was mislaid, and any person was looking for it, frequently it would be thrown to them as though their wants were anticipated. Dr. Phelps was once with Harry in the stable, when the currycomb could not be found, and he asked Harry where it was; to which Harry replied that he did not know. At that moment, the doctor saw it rise, as if thrown, from a point ten feet distant from them, and, describing a parabola, fall within a short distance of the spot where they both were standing.

About the middle of May, Dr. Phelps and Harry were riding to Huntington, a distance of seven miles. When they had proceeded about one mile on the way, a stone, about the size of a hen's egg, was thrown into the carriage, and lodged on Dr. Phelps' hat. Soon another and another were thrown in. The carriage was a covered one, and the back curtain was down, and there was no way a stone could have been thrown in by ordinary means. At one house where they stopped, the moment the front door was opened, two stones were thrown, one of which entered the door as

it stood partly open, and the other hit one of the lights of glass, and broke it. Harry was standing on the door-steps at the time, and there was no one in the street who could have thrown them. Two stones were also thrown against another house where they stopped of an errand. Sixteen stones were thrown into the carriage on the doctor's return, and, including those thrown against the two houses, twenty, in driving three or four hours.

As it was now apparent that these strange things were in some way connected with Harry as a medium, it was thought best to separate him from the family. Accordingly board was obtained for him in a family some two miles distant. One day, when he came home, he told his mother, in great secrecy, that on the night previous he had been awakened from his sleep by some person dressed in white, whom he saw standing by his bedside. He was frightened, and was about to scream, when the person spoke and said, "Be not afraid, my son; I am your father;" and then placed in the boy's hand a silver watch, and told him to wear it for his sake. The boy affirms that he had the watch in his hand; that it was not a dream; and that he was entirely awake; and that his father told him to tell no one of it but his mother and Dr. P. His mother told him it was nothing but a dream, and turned it off as a light affair.

It seems that a valuable silver watch had been left the boy by his father, which was not in use, but had been kept locked up in a drawer of a dressing-table, to which he (Harry) had no access. A member of the family, having occasion to look into the drawer, saw the watch, and knows it was there, and that the drawer was locked, and the key given to Mrs. P. A few minutes after the conversation with his mother about the apparition and the watch, the night previous, he came in from the yard with the watch in his hand! He said his father had again appeared to him, and put the watch into his hand again, and said, "Wear this for my sake." He brought the watch into the house, and showed it to his mother, and said that his father said, "Tell your mother to look at the second-hand." The hand was off, and lay on the face of the

watch under the crystal. A credible person will make oath, if called upon, that she saw the watch in the drawer, where it was usually kept, not more than six or eight minutes before, and that she locked the drawer and gave the key to Mrs. Phelps. The key had been in possession of no other person, and Harry had not been in the room during the time. The watch was taken to Dr. P., and he tried to replace the second-hand, but could not succeed. He closed it, leaving the hand loose on the face, and passed it back to Harry, saying that he must take it to the watch-maker. When he took it in his hand, he exclaimed "Why, it 's on!" They looked, and it was on and going. In a few minutes it was off again, and was put on a second time, all within a minute or two. The doctor affirms that it was not out of his sight a moment; that he knows the watch was not opened, and that no visible power was employed in doing it.

On one occasion the piano-forte was played while it is known that no person was in the room; and, at another time, it was turned around, the front towards the wall, and so far removed from the side of the room as to allow the player room to sit next to the wall; the stool was also appropriately placed.

On several occasions, about this time, certain members of the family saw, or thought they did, visible appearances. Dr. P. did not give entire credit to these statements; not but what he had full confidence in the honesty of the family, but the excited state in which some of them had been for a long time led him to think that they might imagine they saw what had no existence in fact. Towards the last of May, it was signified that one of the spirits who had communicated would appear visibly, — first to the daughter, then to Mrs. P., and then to the doctor himself. They asked in what manner he would appear, and the answer was, "In a sheet." Between ten and eleven o'clock the same night, soon after the family had retired, Anna, who occupied the east bedroom, the door between her room and that where the doctor and his wife slept being open, and a lamp burning on a stand so placed as to light both rooms, called to her mother, and said, "There it is, in

a sheet." Dr. P. asked where; when she said it was in the door between the two rooms, coming from the room the doctor occupied, but the doctor saw nothing. The daughter was frightened, and covered up her head, and in a few minutes looked up and saw nothing. He was represented as moving slowly from one room to the other.

In about two minutes Mrs. Phelps exclaimed, "There it is," and drew the clothes over her head. Both the daughter and mother saw it at this time, but still the doctor saw nothing, although in as favorable position as either of the others.

After two or three minutes had elapsed, the doctor also saw it. It appeared to him to move slowly from the hall chamber into his, and turn and move slowly back. It had the appearance of a very tall person with a sheet thrown around it; he saw only the sheet. In about one minute, something was thrown on to the bed, which proved to be a sheet which had been taken from the wardrobe in the hall. Dr. Phelps declares that he was not frightened in the least, and could not have been mistaken in the appearance. Some two or three weeks subsequent to this a similar appearance was seen, and Dr. P. sprang out of bed, determined to seize hold of it if possible. It came part way into his room, and then moved slowly back. The daughter affirmed that the doctor was within two or three feet of it when it disappeared, and a sheet dropped into a chair. These were the only instances in which the doctor saw anything himself. Others of the family saw persons in a mysterious way several times.

At one time, while Anna was in the dining-room, and a cousin of hers and some of the children in the front yard, her attention was arrested by some one entering the front parlor. She went in, and saw three gentlemen, — two of them sitting on the sofa, and one on a chair by the table, — all having their hats on, and drawn down over their eyes more than usual; the one by the table had his feet upon the table, and was reading a paper. She was surprised that neither of them rose up, or looked at her as she entered the room; and when she was within five or six feet of the one

nearest her, he leaned over on one side and fell, chair and all, on the floor, and instantly all disappeared! She was frightened, and ran to her cousin, who was near the front door. She came in; but no persons were there, neither could they have entered without her seeing them. The chair was thrown down, but no person near who could have done it.

A few other instances occurred in which appearances were supposed to have been seen; but the circumstances were not of a character to put the matter beyond a doubt, therefore no record was kept of them. About the middle of May, Dr. Phelps spent some time with the Fox family in New York. He soon decided that the manifestations were essentially the same as those at his house, with a few points of difference. With them property was not destroyed, and they were not painfully annoyed. The sounds were different, it being with them a double or rolling sound, and at his house a single knock. They could call upon and receive answers from different spirits, or what claimed to be different ones. This could be done at his house. During the months of June and July the same general occurrences continued at Stratford. Sometimes for two or three days there would seem to be an entire cessation of "hostilities." Then they would commence again with redoubled force. People from all parts of the country were visiting the house, to whom every facility was afforded to search into the cause. Newspaper discussions were going on, casting the most unjust and painful reflections, subjecting the family to suffering little short of martyrdom, while numberless other persons had as good an opportunity of explaining the matter as the persecuted family. In this affliction I can sympathize somewhat with Dr. Phelps and family. In the first days of these phenomena in western New York, all persons who were involved with or interested in them were looked upon and treated at once as void of all common feeling or sensibility, both privately and publicly; their names passed about, coupled with opprobrious epithets; their houses were entered without ceremony, and even in the face of direct request to the contrary; their right to quiet and repose invaded, their

houses often being crowded with visitors, prompted by idle curiosity and a malicious desire to torture, beyond the midnight hour; still insisting to remain, and adding insult to injury by declaring in your ears that it was an arrant cheat, — a grand humbug, — being carried on; and all for — what? And at the same time those whose ill-fortune it then seemed to be to have an identity with it were weeping and praying for the scourge to be removed from them; for scourge it seemed, indeed, under such circumstances.

Dr. and Mrs. Phelps concluded, in August, as the demonstrations were then less frequent, on taking a short journey of three weeks. The disturbances were still more annoying in their absence than before; and it was decided as best to close the house for the winter, and remain away. Accordingly, on the 11th of September, Harry left for Pennsylvania, and it was arranged that the other members of the family should follow within three weeks. It seems that, although the manifestations were connected more intimately with Harry, his presence was not all-important, as they did not cease altogether when he left; but communications were still made, though with less force and violence. The knockings were not as loud, and the communications less free or frequent. At one time a note was thrown into the room, while Dr. P. was writing at the desk, which contained the following: — "How soon do the family expect to go to Pennsylvania? I wish to make some arrangements before they go. Please answer in writing." The doctor replied as desired, as follows, "About the first of October," and placed the paper in a position where he had before put writings of the kind, and heard nothing further.

Two or three days after this, a communication was given by use of the alphabet, saying that Root, a gentleman who had been in the house, had destroyed the doctor's book. He inquired "What book?" and was answered "The big book." Yet he did not know what book was designated, and repeated the question, and received the answer, "The big book in the secretary." Still it was not understood. Again was spelled "Look and see!" Dr.

Phelps had in the secretary two blank books; in the larger one he had written a full account of the mysterious manifestations, in the form of a diary, and, having noted them as they occurred from day to day, they were recorded with more minuteness than could afterwards be done. Upon looking, it was discovered that every page that had been written upon was torn from the book and gone! After a long search, the fragments of the leaves were found in the vault. Copies of the characters which the doctor had carefully taken, and felt anxious to preserve, were every scrap gone. There were, in a dressing-table drawer in the chamber, a great number of the notes sent. These were set on fire with a match and burned in the drawer. The fire was discovered by the smoke, but not until the papers were so far charred as to injure them beyond preservation. A few of these writings only are retained, which were in other places. The last of the annoyances was on the 25th of September, and was that of throwing ink upon the daughter's dress. She was standing on the piazza, near the front door; the window of the front chamber was open, from which was thrown a small bottle of ink. The ink went over her dress in a way to entirely unfit it for further use. There was no person in the chamber who would have done such a thing for mischief; and, indeed, no person in the house who would have been guilty of it.

The young lady was just setting out for a visit at New Haven, from which she was anticipating much pleasure, and I cannot conceive of any feeling, short of sheer malevolence, that would prompt such an act.

On the second day of October the family, with the exception of Dr. Phelps and the cook, left Stratford to go to Pennsylvania. During their absence all demonstrations ceased, with what may be termed one exception. A letter, addressed by Dr. Phelps to Mrs. Phelps, contained, when it reached her, some of the spirit-writing in pencil, saying that "her husband was sick and wished her to return if she expected to see him alive." He was then in good health; but the next week was sick and confined to his bed

two or three days. There may or may not have been some connection between the two occurrences. It was the design of Dr. Phelps to separate the family for a time, in order, if possible, to get rid of the annoyance; and for the five weeks he remained at Stratford, after the family had left, no disturbances took place. Harry stayed in Bucks county (Pa.) all winter, and the other members of the family lived in Philadelphia.

In the month of March the family returned to Stratford. The house had been closed and under the charge of a neighbor, and no sign of any disturbance was visible, as every article of furniture was found just as they left it. About the fourth or fifth day after their return slight rapping was heard as they sat at the tea-table. They affected not to notice it, and the next day it was repeated more distinctly, but no response was made. Soon after, certain characters were found about the house, which were known, from the circumstances, to be of recent origin. Two or three days after, distinct communications were made by a spirit purporting to be Dr. Phelps' daughter, who died at the age of twelve years. On being questioned, this spirit could not give any evidence of identity.

About the first of May several communications of a trifling character were given. On one occasion the doctor asked if they would be troubled any more as they had been, when they answered by rapping the following:

> "Be not afraid that they will trouble you more,
> Though we have not quitted Connecticut shore."

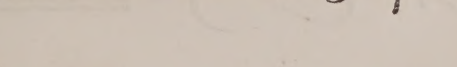
At another time certain characters were given, which were interpreted by the rapping as follows: "Evil one has gone, and better one has come." No communications were made after the early part of May, but some things occurred indicating their presence and desire for mischief.

At one time, on cutting a loaf of bread, there were found in it nails, pen-holders, small sticks and tin, under circumstances which showed that they must have been placed there after it was put

on the table and before the family were ready for tea. At one time Harry's hat was hid away, and then his cap, and then another hat. He took his brother's cap to use, and that was also taken away. On the evening of the 18th of July they set fire to some papers in the doctor's secretary, and some twenty papers and letters were burned before they were discovered. Fire was set at the same time to the papers in both the closets, under the stairs in the hall. They were discovered by the smoke. Two or three days after this, when some friends who had visited them were about to leave, their bonnets and some other articles could not be found, although search was made in every part of the house, until the train by which they were to go to New York had passed. They were at last found, locked into an enclosed wash-stand, in a way that made it morally certain that they could not have been placed there by human hands.

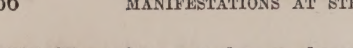
On the 29th of July Harry left to spend some time at New Lebanon, N. Y.; and during his absence no manifestations were noticed, although they were constantly on the look-out for something of the kind. Anna and her mother left for Philadelphia on the 25th of September, and they had been so long exempt from annoyances that they hoped they had ceased altogether. But Harry had the manifestations at New Lebanon, and there was first operated on, by invisible agency, to produce a magnetic sleep, into which he passed with a sudden shock. He had never been magnetized before, although frequent attempts had been made to do so. In this state he evinced all the phenomena common to good clairvoyance. On his return to Stratford, on the 9th of October, the sounds accompanied him almost constantly; but they seemed less inclined to mischief than formerly, because, as they said, "Harry had passed to a higher state, where the low and ignorant spirits could not communicate with him."

On several occasions characters of a unique description were made. The following were written early in April, 1851:

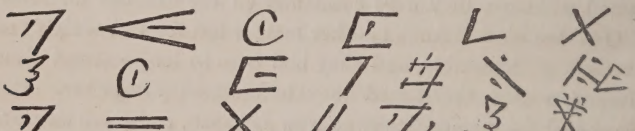


This Harry interpreted to read: "We are to take our leave of you soon."

The following were traced out with chalk on the piazza of the house, on the 31st of March, 1850:



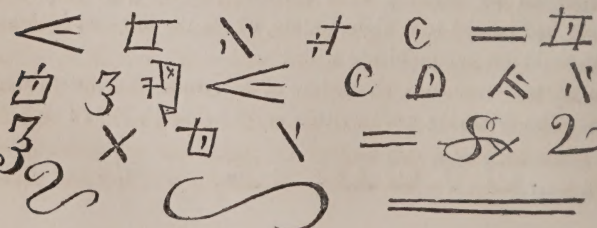
These Harry interpreted to mean: "*You may expect good spirits to come by and by.*" The same characters had been said, by A. J. Davis, to read: "*Our society desires through various mediums to impart thoughts.*" The spirit that seemed to be most prominent in all these communications claimed to be Harry's father, and sometimes a sister of Dr. Phelps, who died about three years previous to this; also a child of Dr. Phelps, who died more than twenty-two years before. The communications seemed generally to come from the boy's father. On the 12th of October he passed into a mesmeric state, and wrote in these characters,



which he translated as follows:

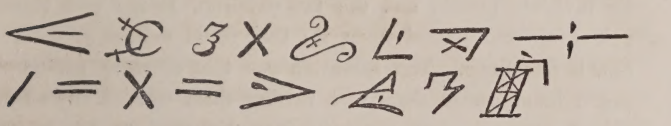
"My dear children: I love you, and try to do everything that will do you good. Obey dear Mr. Phelps in everything, for he knows what is right and what is wrong. This is the advice of your spirit-father."

On the same paper were written as follows:



Translation — "You were troubled once with evil spirits; but now they are no more. They have bid adieu, and good spirits have come and are with you all the time."

Again, occur the following:



Translation — "You must not fear, brother, that you will be troubled with evil spirits any more. No, brother; no more.

(Signed,) "Your spirit-sister, BLISS."

The person here supposed to communicate is a sister of Dr. Phelps, a widow, who left the earth-sphere in 1848, and by whom several of the previous communications are said to have been made. Other characters, of the same general formation, were made at the same time, but were not then translated.

On the evening of the 12th, Dr. Phelps, Harry and two younger children, were seated at a table; responses were frequently given by raps under the table. Dr. Phelps inquired if it would accommodate them at all to have some substance to rap with; to which they replied affirmatively. He threw down a table-knife; the raps seemed immediately to be made by striking the knife against the table-leaf, and soon it was tossed up on to the table. A small tea-bell was then placed under the table; it was rung several times, and tossed on to the table as the knife had been. It was again put down, and returned as before; the same being repeated several times in succession. The light was then extinguished, and the candle put under the table with a match-box containing matches, and the spirits requested to light it. They distinctly heard the match drawn upon the bottom of the box, which was prepared with sand-paper for that use. All saw the light; but the first match went out. Again the scratching of the match was heard; it ignited, the candle lighted, and was placed

upon the table! The experiment was repeated several times, with the same result; every precaution being taken to prevent collusion in the matter.

On a subsequent occasion a chair was placed upon the table by invisible power, and the two children, Harry and Hannah, raised up and placed upon it; they could neither of them tell how it was done. The sensation was that of some person placing a hand under them and raising them up. Many of these things occurred when the room was darkened, as has been the case in numerous other places, and for which explanations have been recorded, as given by the spirits. On the evening of the 20th of October, the light being put out of the room, the bell was placed under the table, with a request that it should be rung, and placed in the doctor's hand. He was sitting by the table with both his hands lying on his lap open, with the palms upward. The bell rang several times with some violence, and then was placed in his left hand. This was repeated four or five times in succession. Dr. P. sat beyond the reach of any one, and the room was sufficiently light for him to have detected any movement on the part of persons present. He requested them to let him feel the hand that placed the bell in his. Very soon a hand came in contact with his, took hold of his fingers, shaking his hand, passed slowly over the back of his hand, then over the palm again, took hold of his fingers, and he felt what he is sure to have been a human hand. He describes it as being cold and moist, which accords with my own experience repeatedly, and that of my friends. They then took hold of his foot, shook it with much force, loosened the string, took off the shoe, and placed it upon the table before him. At his request the shoe was replaced, the heel adjusted, and the strings drawn up, but not tied.

On a subsequent occasion a large-sized tea-bell was rung under the table, then rose up, passed round the room, ringing violently all the way, and fell upon the table. The candle was in the closet, but the room was sufficiently light to make it certain that no person left the table to convey it. It was manifest that from

the time Harry returned from New Lebanon the manifestations began gradually to subside. They were less frequent and less marked. It was arranged that he should accompany the family to Philadelphia, and go to a boarding-school at a town about twenty miles distant from the city. At different times he had been told that if he went there he would again be annoyed by bad spirits. The question was many times put, "Will you annoy him again if he goes to the school?" *Answer.* — "We will not, but others will." — "What others?" *Answer.* — "Those who were with him last summer." — "Will they disturb him if he stays here and goes to the academy in Stratford?" — "No. They will not disturb him while he is with you." — "What will they do if he goes to Pennsylvania?" *Ans.* — "They will tear his clothes, destroy his books, and break his windows." — "Can you not control those bad spirits, and prevent their doing him any injury?" — "No." — "Will you do all you can?" — "Yes." At another time Dr. Phelps inquired if they would not leave him, as his mother was so much opposed to the whole thing. "Will you not, to oblige her, leave him, that he may be a medium no longer?" said the doctor. The reply was, "If we leave him, evil spirits will get possession of him again." These communications were made by what purported to be the boy's father. For two weeks previous to going to Philadelphia the manifestations had almost wholly subsided; perhaps only occurred when requested; and notwithstanding the repeated declarations that when he should leave for the school in Pennsylvania, the bad spirits would come in and make him trouble, it was determined to try the experiment, and on the eleventh of November the family set out for Philadelphia, where they were to spend the winter, while Harry was to go to school. He remained with the family in Philadelphia about a week, where a few communications were given to Dr. Phelps in private. The spirits said they would begin to annoy the boy on the cars, on his way to the school, would pinch him and tear his clothes, so that, when he got there, they would be found torn, and that the troubles would follow him in the school as long as he

stayed there. Dr. Phelps, under all the circumstances, thought it best not to send him; but on consultation it was decided to have him go, and on the nineteenth of November he started for the school. Dr. P. went a mile or two with him, put him under the care of the conductor, and told him to report on his return if anything worthy of notice occurred on the way. In two days the doctor was sent for to come and take him away. He said that soon after his father left him on the cars, he was pinched, pricked with pins, and annoyed in various other ways until he reached his destination; that, on his arrival there, he found that his pantaloons were torn in front, between the waistband and the knees, in two places, several inches in length. He changed them for another pair, which were new, and made of very substantial material, and these were torn down in front, at least half a yard in length, before the doctor arrived there. The knockings had attended him in school and other places; his books were torn and damaged to the amount of two dollars, which the doctor paid. The family where he was had become alarmed, and would not keep him, and he was taken away. The boy stated that on one of the evenings, while he was there, he was walking in the street, when his cap was mysteriously taken from his head and thrown upon the sidewalk. As he stooped to pick it up, he saw the flash of a gun at some distance, and a bullet passed over his back and struck a board fence near him. He was afterward informed by the rapping that, had he not stooped down, he would have been killed, and that his friendly spirit took this means to preserve him.

Dr. P. now concluded to return with Harry to Stratford, and was told that the bad spirits would have no control over him there. The family in which they resided in Philadelphia had become alarmed at the strange occurrences, and finally they again returned to Stratford. From that time the disturbances began to subside, and by the fifteenth of December, 1851, they had ceased altogether. The family remained at Stratford till the spring of 1852, when they returned to their former residence in the city.

The house at Stratford is occupied by another family, but no disturbances have ever occurred with the family which now occupy the house, and none with Dr. P.'s family since the above date.

Thus ends one of the most remarkable histories in the whole course of modern spiritual manifestations. The authority on which it comes to the world is indisputable, and the characters of all concerned are beyond suspicion. It will be observed that generally the demonstrations, as in case of Mr. Calvin R. Brown, in the Fox family, were less boisterous after the family consented to hold communication with them. It seemed to be the desire of a spirit to communicate and set right a matter which was making him unhappy. This accomplished, the demonstrations ceased.

From the foregoing narrative it will be seen that these phenomena do not attach to places, as some have supposed. It makes the fact equally clear that they do attach to persons, and that without certain media they cannot, to any extent, take place. If there is such a thing as "haunted houses," they must belong to another class of phenomena, or a very different phase of the same, than those always depending on the presence of particular persons, as at the house in Stratford.

Another fact seems also to be proved by the above narration, namely, that persons may be powerful mediums at one time and afterwards lose the power, for neither of the media of Dr. Phelps' family in Stratford have had any proof of mediumship for years.

CHAPTER VIII.

MANIFESTATIONS IN NEW YORK CITY — VISIT OF THE FOX FAMILY — MEETING OF LITERATI — THEIR REPORT — OPPONENTS — THE PRESS OF THE CITY — HORACE GREELEY — RETURN OF THE FAMILY TO ROCHESTER — FORMATION OF CIRCLES IN NEW YORK — CREDULITY — MR. CHARLES PARTRIDGE — OCCURRENCES AT HIS HOUSE — EDWARD P. FOWLER — CONFERENCE MEETING — MRS. BROWN — JUDGE EDMONDS, &c., &c.

The advent of the manifestations in the city of New York was in the spring of 1850, when the Fox family went there and took rooms at Barnum's Hotel, where they were visited by hundreds of curious visitors, who had read and heard much of the strange phenomena with which the three sisters were attended. Their presence in the city called forth the criticisms of the press, and the editors were almost universal in their denunciations. One or two allowed both sides a hearing, while others, and far the greatest number, denounced the whole of the alleged phenomena as a deception, the mediums as wicked impostors, and all who believed them to be true to be idiots, lunatics, or knaves. But curiosity had so far obtained the mastery of bigoted opposition as to lead many of the most eminent men of the city to give the subject a fair investigation. The result was, as elsewhere, the making of many converts, and these were not from among men of inferior intellects or of unbalanced minds.

Not long after the arrival of the mediums a number of literary gentlemen assembled at the house of Rev. Dr. Griswold, an Episcopal clergyman, in Broadway. Neither of the sisters Fox had ever been at the house before, and the meeting was called for the purpose of testing, as far as they were able, the validity of these

alleged manifestations. Among the company were J. Fennimore Cooper, the novelist, Mr. George Bancroft, the historian, Rev. Dr. Hawks, Dr. J. W. Francis, Dr. Marcy, Mr. N. P. Willis, Mr. William Cullen Bryant, the poet, and Mr. Bigelow, of the *Evening Post*, Mr. Richard B. Kimball, Mr. H. Tuckerman, and Gen. Lyman. These gentlemen were well known throughout the country, and the report was well calculated to carry much weight with it, let it be on which side it would. The result was highly satisfactory to the mediums and their friends.

On this occasion Mrs. Fox and her three daughters were present. Mr. Tuckerman was among the first to interrogate the spirits. Among his questions were the following in regard to an individual whose name he had not spoken, but had simply in his mind.

"Did he live in New York?" No answer. "In Baltimore? in Cambridge? in Boston?" — three distinct raps, which is the sign of an affirmative answer. A negative reply is indicated by silence. Mr. T. continued, "Was he a lawyer? a merchant? a physician? a clergyman?" Knocks. "Was he an Episcopalian? a Presbyterian? a Unitarian?" — going over the names of the principal sects. No answer. At the suggestion of a gentleman, Mr. T. asked, "Was he a Christian?" Knocks. Mr. T. then asked the age of the person in a series of tens. "Was he twenty years old at the time of his death? was he thirty? fifty? sixty?" Knocks. "Has he left a family?" Knocks. "Children?" Knocks. "Five? three? two?" Knocks. "Did he die in Boston? in Philadelphia? in Albany? in Northampton? in Bennington?" Knocks. "Did he die of consumption? of fever? of cholera? of old age?" Knocks.

The person in Mr. Tuckerman's mind was the late Dr. William Ellery Channing, the eminent and liberal Unitarian divine. He lived in Boston, and died in Bennington, Vt., while on a journey.

Dr. John Francis having fixed in his mind the name of an individual, the "rapping" spelled out B-u-r—when several of the

company exclaimed, spontaneously, "Robert Burns." This was the true answer, and, after an interesting interview with the bard of Scotia, the doctor declined asking any more questions.

Mr. Jas. Fennimore Cooper then asked, "Is the person I inquire about a relative?"—"Yes" was at once indicated by the knocks.—"A near relative?"—"Yes."—"A man?" No answer. "A woman?"—"Yes."—"A daughter? a mother? a wife?" No answer. "A sister?"—"Yes." Mr. C. then asked the number of years since her death. Fifty knocks were given, and the number unanimously so announced by the company. Mr. C. now asked, "Did she die of consumption?" and naming several diseases to which no answer was given. "Did she die by accident?" —"Yes."—"Was she killed by lightning? was she shot? was she lost at sea? did she fall from a carriage? was she thrown from a horse?"—"Yes."

Mr. Cooper here discontinued his investigations, and informed the company that just fifty years ago that present month he had a sister thrown from a horse and killed, and that all the answers in regard to her were strictly correct.

Mr. Ripley, one of the editors of the *Tribune*, a man of candor and great intelligence, drew up the report of the whole proceedings, of which the above is but a short extract, and in conclusion he says:

"The evening was now far advanced, and it was not thought desirable to continue our colloquies any further. At the suggestion of several gentlemen, the ladies removed from the sofa, where they had sat during the evening, and remained standing in another part of the room. The knockings were now heard on the doors, at both ends of the room, producing a vibration on the panels which was felt by every one who touched them. Different gentlemen stood on the outside and inside of the door at the same time, when loud knockings were heard on the side opposite to where they stood.

"The ladies were at such a distance from the door, in both

cases, as to render no countenance to the idea that the sounds were produced by any direct communication with them. They now went into a parlor under the room in which the party was held, accompanied by several gentlemen, and the sounds were then produced with great distinctness, causing sensible vibrations in the sofa, and apparently coming from a thick hearth-rug before the fire-place, as well as from other quarters of the room.

"Such are the most important facts which we can recall of the manifestations of the evening. We believe we have stated them without any coloring whatever, as they appeared to every one present, but, with regard to their origin or their nature, we are as much in the dark as any of our readers."

Such candid statements, made on the authority of men eminent for their literary attainments and sense of honor, attracted very general attention, and it was hard to conceive how a whole company of them could be deceived by a couple of girls.

About this time the discussion of the subject by the newspaper press was at its height, and no day passed without some comment on the strange phenomena. As often as once a day some "expose" appeared; but the great difficulty seemed to be that each expose was contradicted by some other from a different quarter, so that the different exponents were more contradictory than the various communications from discordant spirits.

Among the many persons who figured as the discoverers of fraud were Mr. John W. Hurn, of Rochester, N. Y., John Stanley Grimes, a noted lecturer on phrenology, mesmerism, electro-psychology, &c., Rev. John M. Austin, of Auburn, N. Y. (Universalist minister), a clerk in the New York custom-house, who wrote over the signature "Shadrach Barnes," and several other individuals. The most prominent of the newspapers which daily "exposed" the whole affair, were the *New York Express*, the *Herald*, the *Commercial Advertiser*, the *Journal of Commerce*, the *Morning Star*, the *Day-Book*, and some others; and among the weeklies, the *Police Gazette*, the *New York Observer* (religious), the *Sunday Times* (then edited by M. M. Noah, the Jew),

and all the religious press without exception. In another part of this work, I propose to give the substance of the different objections and pretended exposures, that they may be placed on record for future reference.

Very frequently persons who visited the family at Barnum's Hotel gave short accounts of their interviews, which were rarely refused, when confined mostly to facts, a place in the *Tribune*. The following is one of that class:

"MR. EDITOR: Permit me to state briefly my own experience in reference to the phenomena called the Mysterious Knockings. On Saturday last, being at Barnum's Hotel, in company with several others, I called on the celebrated ladies whose names are associated with the knockings. After several partial attempts at communications with spirits on the part of different members of the company, a gentleman present asked permission to question the spirits in his own way, which was granted. He commenced with the question, Will you hold communication with me to-day? *Ans.* (Prompt, three loud raps) Yes. *Q.* Will the spirit of my mother answer me? *A.* Yes. *Q.* Will the spirit answer me when I place my mind on the spot where my mother died? *A.* Yes. (Correct.) *Q.* Will the spirit tell me the spot where her ashes now moulder, when my mind indicates it? *A.* Yes. (Correct.) *Q.* Is my mother happy? *Q.* Am I happy? *A.* (One loud rap.) No. *Q.* Which of the following situations in business will be the most eligible? The answer here was very prompt, and was the truest answer that could be given. *Q.* Will either of the names in the following list ever become my wife? *A.* Yes. *Q.* Will the spirit indicate which one? *A.* Yes. *Q.* Will the spirit spell the lady's name when the letters are called? *A.* Yes, — when the name of Miss —— —— was spelled forward and back, and every question answered in relation to her; but if any other subject was named, the spirit would repeat, 'Done,' and gave no other reply. In this case the questions were put mentally, and none could know their import, and, let the origin be what it may, the answers were correct, in every in-

stance, when any answer could be given. And, although quite marvellous, I make this statement in good faith, and can only say I admit the existence of the phenomena, but know nothing of the nature of the sounds. S."

Notwithstanding the violent opposition of the *New York Express*, one of the reporters of that paper came out in an article at some length, and closed by saying that "those who accuse the ladies of making the rappings, or of being accessory to the mode of producing them, will be satisfied generally, in a short time, that such is not the case, as they are heard at so many different places at the same time, and in such different sounds also, that it would be impossible to produce them by any machinery. There does not seem to be any set time or place when they appear, as after the public interview was ended, and the ladies had gone into the public parlor, the noise was continued, sometimes under foot, and again upon the parlor door, where there could be no collusion, as both sides of it were watched. I can offer no explanation of these sounds; I believe them to be inexplicable. If any one thinks he can explain them, he had better see for himself before undertaking it. I do know that, when the rapping was heard near me, I felt a distinct jar or vibration, sometimes near my foot, and again over it."

A correspondent of the same paper wrote as follows: "We have had our hour with the 'spirits,' and a very agreeable hour it was, too, so entirely different from anything we had anticipated, so perfectly free from any 'art or trickery,' that we feel bound to confess that we stood before these innocent, artless girls, overwhelmed with astonishment and utterly confounded. That we were in the presence of spirits willing to commune with us, was hard, very hard to believe. That anything but a spirit could have answered our questions so correctly, we do not believe; for instance, after going through with the usual preliminaries, and finding that the spirits manifested a willingness to answer our interrogatories, we took from our pocket a card, on which were

numbers, running from sixty down to thirty, omitting only our correct age, and requesting them to knock when we pointed to our age; and after running over the card some three or four times we could get no answer. We then took another card, precisely similar, with the exception that our own age was on it, and the moment we pointed to it the answer was correctly given. We then requested that when we pointed to our age again, three distinct raps should be given, and it was done. We then requested (mentally) that if they were spirits, they would manifest themselves by rapping on the soles of our feet; — they did so, and the feeling was as palpable as would be that of a small hammer, and the sound so loud as to be heard by all in the room. Now, is not this, to say the least, very strange?"

Many distinguished visitors waited upon the mediums, and a large proportion of them became converts to the spiritual theory. Yet they were very slow to avow their belief while it remained so unpopular, and while the press treated the subject with such universal ridicule. However, there were not wanting men of moral courage, who boldly advocated not only the total absence of all intentional fraud on the part of the ladies, but avowed their belief in the spirituality of the communications. In answer to the attacks of J. Stanly Grimes and others, William Fishbough, of Williamsburgh, wrote a series of able articles in the *Tribune*, taking the spiritual side.

During the time of the mediums' visit to the city, circles were formed by a number of individuals, who were determined to investigate the matter to its fullest extent. Other mediums were soon developed, and the investigations could be carried on without the presence of any of the family who had excited so much curiosity and angry newspaper discussion.

It was after a visit of two months or more that the Fox family left the city to return to their homes in Rochester. Some time previous to their leaving, they had left the hotel and visited private families, where better opportunities were afforded for investigation. Among the families visited was that of Horace Greeley,

editor of the *Tribune*, and, after their departure, he published the following in his paper, over his own initials:

"THE MYSTERIOUS RAPPINGS.

"Mrs. Fox and her three daughters left our city yesterday, on their return to Rochester, after a stay here of some weeks; during which they have subjected the mysterious influence, by which they seem to be accompanied, to every reasonable test, and to the keen and critical scrutiny of hundreds who have chosen to visit them, or whom they have been invited to visit. The rooms which they occupied at the hotel have been repeatedly searched and scrutinized; they have been taken without an hour's notice into houses they had never before entered; they have been all unconsciously placed on a glass surface, concealed under the carpet, in order to interrupt electrical vibrations; they have been disrobed by a committee of ladies, appointed without notice, and insisting that neither of them should leave the room until the investigation had been made, &c. &c.; yet we believe no one, to this moment, pretends that he has detected either of them in producing or causing the 'rappings,' nor do we think any of their contemners has invented a plausible theory to account for the production of these sounds, nor the singular intelligence which (certainly at times) has seemed to be manifested through them.

"Some ten or twelve days since, they gave up their rooms at the hotel, and devoted the remainder of their sojourn here to visiting several families, to which they had been invited by persons interested in the subject, and subjecting the singular influence to a closer, calmer examination than could be given to it at a hotel, and before casual companies of strangers, drawn together by vague curiosity more than rational interest, or predetermined and invincible hostility. Our own dwelling was among those they thus visited; not only submitting to, but courting, the fullest and keenest inquiry with regard to the alleged 'manifestations' from the spirit-world, by which they were attended. We devoted what time we could spare from our duties, out of three days, to this

subject; and it would be the basest cowardice not to say that we are convinced beyond a doubt, of *their perfect integrity and good faith* in the premises. Whatever may be the origin or cause of the 'rappings,' the ladies in whose presence they occur do not make them. We tested this thoroughly and to our entire satisfaction.

"Their conduct and bearing is as unlike that of deceivers as possible; and we think no one acquainted with them could believe them at all capable of engaging in so daring, impious and shameful a juggle as this would be if they caused the sounds. And it is not possible that such a juggle should have been so long perpetrated in public. A juggler performs one feat quickly, and hurries on to another; he does not devote weeks after weeks to the same thing over and over, deliberately, in full view of hundreds who sit beside or confronting him in broad daylight, not to enjoy, but to detect his trick. A deceiver naturally avoids conversation on the subject of his knavery, but these ladies converse freely and fully with regard to the origin of these 'rappings' in their dwellings, years ago, the various sensations they caused, the neighborhood excitement created, the progress of the developments, — what they have seen, heard and experienced from first to last. If all were false, they could not fail to have involved themselves ere this in a labyrinth of blasting contradictions, as each separately gives accounts of the most astonishing developments at this or that time. Persons foolish enough so to commit themselves without reserve or caution, could not have deferred a thorough self-exposure for a single week.

"Of course, a variety of opinions of so strange a matter would naturally be formed by the various persons who have visited them, and we presume that those who have merely run into their room for an hour or so, and listened, among a huddle of strangers, to a medley of questions — not all admitting of very profitable answers — put to certain invisible intelligences, and answered by 'rappings,' or singular noises on the floor, table, &c., as the alphabet was called over, or otherwise, would naturally go away, per-

haps puzzled, probably disgusted, rarely convinced. It is hardly possible that a matter, ostensibly so grave, could be presented under circumstances less favorable to conviction. But of those who have enjoyed proper opportunities for a full investigation, we believe that fully three fourths are convinced, as we are, that these singular sounds and seeming manifestations are not produced by Mrs. Fox and her daughters, nor by any human being connected with them.

"How they *are* caused, and whence they proceed, are questions which open a much wider field of inquiry, with whose way-marks we do not profess to be familiar. He must be well acquainted with the arcana of the universe, who shall presume dogmatically to decide that these manifestations are natural or supernatural. The ladies say that they are informed that this is but the beginning of a new era, or economy, in which spirits clothed in the flesh are to be more closely and palpably connected with those who have put on immortality; that the manifestations have already appeared in many other families, and are destined to be diffused and rendered clearer, until all who will may communicate freely with their friends who have 'shuffled off this mortal coil.' Of all this we know nothing, and shall guess nothing. But if we were simply to print (which we shall not) the questions we asked and answers we received, during a two hours' uninterrupted conference with the 'rappers,' we should at once be accused of having done so expressly to sustain the theory which regards these manifestations as the utterances of departed spirits.

"H. G."

This testimony was due to the Fox family, and was honorable to the independent and high-minded editor, who dared to brave public opinion, and utter his convictions, after a candid and patient investigation. Such a course presents a striking contrast to those lesser lights of the editorial profession who condemn without ever having investigated at all.

On the return of the family from New York to their home in

Rochester, their house was thronged, and they found it utterly impossible to fulfil their intentions of remaining at home and retiring from all public observation. The only way left for them seemed to be to make themselves servants of the public, and allow this strange matter to be fully investigated by all who wished, — the same public, who used their time, paying them for it, so that they might obtain the means of living. Many of their friends advised them to this course, as did also their invisible attendants.

The fact of their taking pay for their time has often been used as an argument to prove that the whole was a mere money-making trick, and as *prima facie* evidence of fraud. Why the preaching of tangible spiritualism should be subject to such an imputation, more than any other preaching, is not entirely plain, unless it be that the paying of one kind of preachers is an old custom, and those who conform to it do not feel willing to admit a new class of competitors into the field. We have never been able to comprehend why one person should devote his or her time to the service of the public, — whether as preacher of religion, the demonstrator of some new truth, or the gratifier of curiosity, — without compensation, more than another; yet it seemed to be expected of the Fox family that they should give their time without compensation, or be accused of trickery — a rule which theological teachers would deem very unjust when applied to them; — and it is questionable whether they would make a greater sacrifice than did this same family to sustain their several religions.

Finding themselves forced into a public position, they abandoned all ideas of quiet, and made a tour to the west, where they created the same excitement as in other parts of the country; and in the autumn of the same year they made a second visit to New York. In the mean time, several other persons had become mediums for various manifestations in the city, and many distinguished men had become interested. Among the first concerted movements was the New York Circle, formed on the first of August, 1851,

consisting of the following members: Hon. J. W. Edmonds, Edward P. Fowler, Miss A. L. Fowler, Dr. J. B. Gray and lady, Dr. Hull, Charles Partridge, Mrs. S. A. Partridge, Dr. Warner, Dr. R. T. Hallock and lady, W. J. Baner and lady, and Robert T. Shannon. Occasionally, Professor George Bush, Hon. J. W. Edmonds, S. B. Brittan, Almon Roff, and others, met with them by invitation. These were the pioneer investigators of New York city.

From that time circles were formed and new mediums were developed in rapid succession. In some circles the most ridiculous and fanatical scenes were enacted under direction of the invisible agencies, and men who were generally reasonable, when once they became possessed with the idea that they had discovered a perfect guide in the new and strange phenomena, seemed willing to merge their common sense in it, and be guided by all that the "spirits" told them, however at variance with sound reason or philosophy. Thus, we have an authenticated account of a circle of intelligent men who were told to "all lie down on the floor" in a dark room, and actually obeyed! There was no remarkable manifestation in this case except of the resignation of reason to an unknown but supposed superior power. Continued investigation revealed the fact that the spirits were, like mortals, liable to great mistakes in philosophy, facts and reasoning. Some bitter disappointments and mortifying experiences were necessary to stay the tide of fanatical belief in the *perfection* of all spiritual communications; and the experiences were abundant, and generally produced the desired effect. Learning that all was not perfectly reliable, they became prepared to find their true value by more careful investigation.

While there were a large number of the above stamp, there were calm, sceptical, philosophical persons, who contested every inch of ground, and yielded to the spiritual theory when forced, by the most unmistakable evidence, to do so. The pioneer of this class of investigators was Mr. Charles Partridge, who for some time kept Margaretta and Catharine Fox at his house, for the

purpose of seeing the manifestations in every conceivable form. He had merely called on them when they were at Barnum's Hotel, during their first visit to New York, but without obtaining much satisfaction. On his return from a western journey, he, in company with his wife, called at the house of the Fox family, in Rochester, where he had a manifestation so remarkable as to be worthy of record; especially as it was the first convincing proof to one who has since become one of the most effectual champions of the spiritual cause in this country.

When he visited the family at Rochester he was a stranger to them and in the city. Immediately after taking seats around the table the rapping commenced. Mr. Partridge asked if the spirit would rap if he would write the name it bore on earth. *Ans.* "Yes." He then wrote down the names of some dozen persons, living and deceased, and raps were made while writing the names of his brother, who died in California, in September, 1849. To ascertain the month, he wrote down several months on a paper, and when he came to September there was a rap. In the same way the day of the month on which his spirit left the body was indicated. Many other test questions were answered correctly, and some information spelled out by the alphabet which Mr. Partridge supposed was not correct, but which subsequently proved to be true.

They left for their hotel, and returned about four o'clock, P. M., when, being again in communication, some twenty names were written down, to get the one communicating, about half of them being of persons living. Raps were made at the names of a deceased son, brother and cousin, and while pointing to them, with his arm resting on a heavy dining-table, it moved away from him some eighteen inches. He was somewhat astonished, and drew it back, and it moved away again. He then got up and made a minute examination of the floor and table, till he was convinced that no person touched it, and no machinery was attached to it. Soon after this a terrible creaking noise commenced, like the laboring and creaking of a ship in a heavy sea,

with an occasional dull, heavy sound, as if a wave had struck her heavily on the side. This was continued ten or twelve minutes. Mrs. Fish remarked that it was an unusual sound, and she did not know what it meant. Mr. Partridge thought it resembled the creaking of the steamer Atlantic before her wreck on Fisher's Island, in November, 1846, when he was on board, and barely escaped with his life; being the only one that escaped from the stern of the vessel. The representation brought to his mind a young lady who was under his care, and was lost, and on adding her name to the list a shower of raps was heard, apparently all over the table. Mrs. Fish asked if he knew what it all meant. He replied that he believed he did, but did not wish to tell her, as it would be an excellent test. He asked if the last name written by him was the one the spirit bore, and was answered by a shower of raps. To the question "How many years since your death?" it replied by three full and one partial rap, signifying three years and a fraction, which was correct. He then wrote down the months of the year, to ascertain when the occurrence took place, and the rapping came promptly on November. He then commenced at one, and made figures denoting the days of the month, and the rapping came on 27 and 28, which was correct. Mrs. Fish thought it was wrong, and said she could not have died on two days, supposing that it was in regard to her death that she was answering; but Mr. Partridge continued his questions in regard to some other incidents, all of which were answered to his entire satisfaction.

The extraordinary manifestation of sounds, like that of a ship laboring with a heavy sea, was so far from anything expected, and it was so palpably done without any mechanical means, so apt for the man and the occasion, and brought the whole of that terrible scene of danger and death so vividly before him, that it was not easy for him to escape conviction on the spot. But, strange and unaccountable as it was, his naturally sceptical mind waited for still more ample evidence, which he obtained only by a long course of

rigid investigation, with the medium in his own house, and by attending circles organized for such investigation.

A curious and convincing manifestation (among numerous others) took place at his house, with Catharine Fox as the medium, in presence of two of his neighbors, who had seen something previously, but had expressed the opinion to Mr. Partridge that they were all deceived, and that the medium was an impostor. Mr. Partridge, being anxious to detect any trick, urged them to come again and assist him in proving their suspicions true, if they had any foundation. They finally came, with a confident expectation that they were, at last, to make the whole matter plain. After they were all seated by the table the alphabet was called for, and one of the visitors was asked by the spirits, "What will satisfy you?" His answer was: "I will be satisfied if I can see that lamp move about on the table without any person touching it." They then spelled to the other visitor, "What will satisfy you?" He replied: "To see the medium stand up in the chair so that we can see her feet, and then hear the rapping." The spirits then spelled, "Cathy (the medium), stand up in the chair." She stood up in the chair, and the rapping was made in various places, and in great abundance. She was then requested to sit down, which she did, when the lamp on the table was moved about, without any visible means, to the entire satisfaction of the sceptic. But the scene did not end here. The spirits requested the whole company to go and stand by the front window, some dozen feet from the table. They did so, leaving the chairs standing around the table, just as they had occupied them. After they had taken their places by the window the chairs at the end of the table moved, one to the right and the other to the left, forming an opening through which the table moved out slowly, and came to the place where they were all standing! Here was a case so palpable that the two sceptics could not disbelieve, however much they might wish to; for their senses could not be mistaken in such a case. It is needless to say that they acknowledged themselves fully convinced

that whatever the power was, it was not the medium that caused the extraordinary manifestations.

One of the most remarkable manifestations on record, since the commencement of modern "miracles," is that which took place with Edward P. Fowler, in the production of autographic manuscripts by the agency of spirits. At a meeting of the New York Circle (before spoken of), held on the 11th of December, 1851, at the house of Charles Partridge, the subject of Kossuth's mission to this country was incidentally introduced, when the spirits spelled to E. P. Fowler the following:

"Edward, put a paper on your table, and we will write a sentiment, and subscribe our names; then you may all sign it too."

In giving a precise statement of the occurrences,* Mr. Fowler states that the original paper containing the autographs was found on his table about three o'clock one afternoon, on his return from business; the paper being drawing-paper which was incidentally left blank in his room on going away. This was taken to the circle, and the signatures of the members subscribed to it; but they had omitted the history of the occurrence, and, there being some irregularity in fixing the signatures, the spirits told him (Edward) to "burn that, and we will write upon another."

In accordance with this direction, a parchment was procured and placed on Edward's table, and the autographs were reproduced during the night while he was in bed and asleep, and he most solemnly avers that with many of the signatures he was wholly unacquainted. Indeed, it would hardly be supposed that he was acquainted with the signatures of many who were never known in public life, and had passed from existence before he was born. There were also other writings of various oriental languages found in his room, and in regard to all of them he says: "That these writings have not been imposed upon me I know, because *I have seen some of them written.* I have seen them

* See Richmond and Brittan's Discussion, Letter I.

written in the daytime as well as night; and that I was in no abnormal condition I infer from the fact that my consciousness of the circumstances of outward life remained unimpaired. The ringing of fire-bells, moving of engines, tolling of the bells at the ferry, the paddling of the boat's wheels, and various other noises common to the city, were no less distinctly heard than at other times."

Mr. Fowler had never seen any manuscript in the languages in which most of them were written, and there is an authentic chain of evidence to prove his entire innocence of fraud in the matter. On the paper above alluded to was written this sentiment: — "PEACE, BUT NOT WITHOUT FREEDOM." To this was affixed the initials "B. F., Dec. 1851." Then followed the following signatures, being placed without any particular regard to order, but in exact *fac similes* of the handwriting of the persons they purported to be:

B. Franklin, John Hancock, B. West, Phil. Livingston, Jr., Roger Sherman, John Adams, Stephen Hopkins, George Washington, J. ———, W. Kosuer, Samuel Adams, J. Q. Adams, Charles Carroll, Martha Washington, Rowland Ellis, Robert Morris, Lewis Morris, Robert Fulton, W. H. Harrison, John Turnbull, D. P. Madison, James K. Polk, Andrew Jackson, John Penn, William Penn, James Madison, H. Bell, John Fitch, Thomas Jefferson, James Monroe, T. Knox, Nathl. Green, Alexander Hamilton, John K. Paulding, Joseph C. Neal, John Moylan, Richard Henry Lee, Benj. Gray, G. Gray, J. Fennimore Cooper, Edgar A. Poe, Paul Jones, G. ———, Wm. Dickinson, J. Otis, P. Henry, Y. D. Sanford, Jas. N. Fowler, James Hull, S. Skinner, R. Partridge, J. Harris.

I have in some instances examined the handwriting of the persons whose spirits are alleged to have been present to sign the above sentiment, and they were exact. Others are well known to the public, and they can judge of their correctness by referring to the *fac simile* which may be found in Vol. I., No. 22, of the Spiritual Telegraph, published in the city of New York. The original

parchment, as well as several of the original specimens of the oriental languages, are in possession of Charles Partridge, of the same place.

At some of the sittings of this circle, Mr. Henry C. Gordon, a medium, was taken up bodily, and conveyed about the room, without any visible power to support him. Sometimes his head and hands came in contact with the ceiling of the room, and he would float about the room in the air for several minutes. At the house of Dr. Gray, in Lafayette-place, he was thus carried through different apartments for a distance of more than sixty feet. This is attested by many credible witnesses, among whom are Dr. Gray and Mr. Partridge.

This is hardly more strange than the case related by Dr. Hallock, where the circle was sitting around a smooth mahogany table, which had on it loose papers, a lead pencil, two candles and a glass of water. The table was used by the spirits to make responses, and when it was elevated to an angle of about thirty degrees, *all the articles retained their places.* The pencil and all other articles remained as if glued to the table. At the request of some one of the circle, the pencil was detached, and rolled off, retaining everything else in its former position. The pencil was replaced, and they were requested to retain everything else but the glass tumbler, and let that slide off, which was done, no other article moving from its place. We have seldom, if ever, known a more astonishing exhibition of the power of these manifestations than this, although it may at first look very simple. No ordinary and unintelligent power could be made to operate on the articles mentioned without bringing them all under the common laws of gravitation. When its complex character is considered, it will not often be surpassed even in this continual series of marvellous occurrences.

One of the most important means of increasing the knowledge of these manifestations was the weekly conferences held at the house of Mr. Partridge. If we remember rightly, they were kept up for two years or more. Sometimes not less than a hundred

persons convened to hear what new developments had transpired during the week.

As we look upon these as model meetings for those who are desirous of investigating similar, or any new subjects, we give a brief account of the way they were carried on. There was no organization other than a common intelligence, and courtesy, and respect for each other's rights, produced naturally and spontaneously. There was no set form — no opening or closing ceremonies; but all useless and cumbrous organization machinery was dispensed with. Each was free to speak his or her own thoughts without any dictation or fear of violating some written rule or creed. The common bond of brotherhood and the common wish to learn produced Heaven's first law — order. It was very little given to theories and speculations; but each one that had learned a new fact, or seen any strange manifestation during the week, here related it for the common good, and to increase the general store of knowledge. Those who were not members of circles came as listeners. At first, perhaps, many came from curiosity; but we venture the prediction that no meeting of similar numbers ever made so many converts from among so intelligent a class of people. Mr. Partridge being a man of wealth (though too independent and high-minded to be considered "fashionable"), many wealthy persons came to his house when they would not have subjected themselves to the ridicule consequent upon attending a place of public investigation. The consequence was the conversion of many of the most wealthy families of New York to spiritualism.

Another great impulse was given to spiritual investigations by Mrs. Brown (formerly Mrs. Fish), who took up her permanent residence in the city, having two or three sittings daily, for the accommodation of the public. During the first year, her house was constantly thronged with visitors. Many of the physicians and scientific men of the city engaged an hour or two in each week to be devoted to their exclusive critical and scientific investigations. Some of these continued their examinations for a whole year,

universally resulting in conviction of the spirituality of the manifestations.

To attempt to record any considerable number of the astonishing occurrences at Mrs. Brown's would be useless; for they were daily occurring. Many most beautiful and true communications I have seen spelled out to entire strangers. The following may serve as a specimen of some of them, which were given in my presence. They are given merely to show the tenor of many of the communications:

A little girl was present with her father, and her hand was moved without her control, giving signs of becoming a writing-medium, when the following kind and rational advice was spelled out to the father: — "I feel deeply interested in your little daughter. I want you, therefore, to be led according to your own good judgment and reason in regard to taking her into promiscuous parties. She should not always be led by advice which she thinks comes from pure and elevated spirits. My dear David, I will give you a rule by which you and Mary shall always be guided, as you are responsible for the protection and elevation of your children. When a spirit assumes *authority*, in giving directions, follow not such dictation. God made you a freeman, and he has given you light and liberty to act accordingly. When a spirit speaks unreasonable things, be kind to him, but maintain your own ground, and gently lead him along in the paths of progression."

In this case, the names of "David" and "Mary" were entirely unknown to the medium, or to any of the company present except the ones to whom the message was delivered.

One evening, while I was visiting Mrs. Brown, two young men came in, who were from the State of Tennessee. One of them asked if a spirit would communicate with him, and was answered in the affirmative. "What spirit is it?" — "Your father." The young man then wrote down on a paper the following question: — "By what means did you die?" Immediately the alphabet was called for, and the word "Poisoned" spelled out. The young man

started with evident astonishment, for he did not anticipate so prompt and correct a reply. He then asked if his father had anything to communicate to him, and received the following:

"My son, lift your thoughts to God, and remember your wrongs no more. To dwell upon the past will retard your progress and blight your future prospects. Your path leads on to glory; then labor to overcome evil with good, and a crown of righteousness will be yours in time and eternity. Your affectionate father,

"HENRY CHAMPION."

The young man then detailed the facts that his father was murdered by poison administered by a brother, who had, as is too often the case in some of the south-western states, escaped the penalty of the law. The son declared that he had for years been determined on revenging his father's death. Unlike Shakspeare's Hamlet, the father advised him to dispel such feelings, and the son declared that from that hour his schemes of revenge would be given up.

On a subsequent evening, seven young men from Georgia called on Mrs. Brown. They were total strangers. One of them asked if there was a spirit that would communicate with him. Immediately the alphabet was called, and the name "Laura" was spelled out. The young man looked confused, and denied all knowledge of her. The spirit then spelled, "What! don't you remember *me?*" The young man became more agitated, but still denied ever having any knowledge of any person by that name. The glances cast from one to the other of his companions told plainly that *they* knew who Laura was, and that a tender chord had been touched. The spirit then spelled, "You all know who Laura was." Mrs. Brown's curiosity was excited, and she suggested that the young man ask what relation the spirit bore to him. He replied, "I never had any relative by that name." The alphabet was called for, and "What constitutes relationship?" spelled. The agitation of the young man was apparently almost beyond

endurance, and Mrs. Brown herself asked, "Was it a mother?"—"No" (by one rap).—"Was it a sister?"—"No."—"Was it an aunt?"—"No."—"Was it a wife?" No sound was heard. The young man could endure it no longer, and left the room, retired to the parlor, and paced the floor in agony of mind. One of his companions followed him out, and remained with him, and they did not return to the circle again. The whole thing was sufficiently explained by one of the young men, who remarked that "*she ought to have been his wife; and if she had been, she would probably be alive now.*"

On a subsequent occasion, I was present when one of the ladies asked, *mentally*, if her husband was present. The alphabet was called for, and the following reply given:

"My dear, I am. I have tried to impress you with my presence when you were alone. It is very delightful to be put in communication with those we love. All is well with me, my dear. There are new developments being made to the world, and all, from the least to the greatest, shall know the truth. JACOB."

The lady was a total stranger, and she had not mentioned her husband, nor did she until his name was spelled out by what purported to be his spirit.

A gentleman present, an entire stranger, asked if the spirit of his mother-in-law had anything to say to him, and received the following answer through the alphabet:

"Tell my dear Elizabeth I am her own mother. Tell her I have watched over her, and wept as angels weep over the sorrows of their children on earth. I love and bless you for your kindness to her. "CATHARINE ——."

Her whole name was given, but I am not at liberty to publish it. None present, except the one asking the question, knew of any of the family circumstances, of which this was a correct in-

dication. It was stated by the gentleman that unusual sorrow had fallen to the lot of his wife, and the whole message was appropriate.

Another gentleman was present, who had previously been promised a communication. He asked for the spirit of his wife, and received, through the alphabet, the following:

"My dear husband, I am ready to redeem my promise. I have lingered all day long at your side, and our dear Julia is here to unite with me. May you be happy, my dear husband. When the spirits gather around you at twilight hour, then bend your thoughts to God. When you retire at night, remember we draw near to comfort you; and when trouble assails, retire to your closet, where we can meet and join with you in prayer.

"FRANCES."

He then received the following:

"My son, you have diligently sought for truth, and those who seek shall find their portion. You have guides who can lead your way, and throw out every block which has hitherto impeded your progress. YOUR MOTHER."

The names "Frances" and "Julia" were not known to any person present except the gentleman to whom they were given.

These communications show not only a knowledge far beyond the media, but breathe a spirit of goodness and rationality. The communications were not all of this beautiful character; but under favorable circumstances, where an elevated circle was convened, it was far more common to get true than false communications. Whatever may be the faults and errors of Mrs. Brown, — and she has no more than humanity in general, — she has borne herself nobly against persecution and abuse of the most bitter kind, and faithfully maintained what she honestly believes the one great truth, — the spirituality of these communications. If ever this proves a real and permanent blessing to all mankind, the

name of Ann Leah Brown should stand conspicuous as one of the "heroines of history" who fought the battle against a world of opposition, while her younger sisters were the only media, and after she became so herself.

On the 8th of May, 1852, Mr. Partridge commenced the publication of the *Spiritual Telegraph*. It was edited by S. B. Brittan, a man of very critical and correct literary taste, and the most philosophical, cool and discriminating, of all our spiritual writers. The paper has been very successful, and has a great influence on the public mind.

The number of media in the city for the various kinds of manifestations has increased to hundreds, and the believers are numbered by tens of thousands. An intelligent gentleman, who has kept the run of the matter, estimates the believers in the city, Brooklyn and Williamsburgh, at FORTY THOUSAND; and, from what we know, we should say that the estimate was rather below than above the reality.

Among the distinguished public men of New York who became converts to spiritualism, none elicited more comment than Hon. John W. Edmonds, one of the judges of the Court of Appeals, the highest tribunal in the State of New York. He had been in public life for many years; had been a state senator from his district, and distinguished himself there on several important measures. He was known to the whole state and in other states. This fact made his public announcement of belief in spiritual manifestations the more notorious, and it was commented on with great severity by the press throughout the country. Falsehood, ridicule, and the cry of "insanity," were the cheap and ready weapons hurled at his devoted head.

The first account of his "personal experiences" appeared in April, 1852.* He gives the following account of his first introduction to the mysteries of spiritualism:

"It is now a little over a year since I was afflicted with the

* Shekinah, vol. i., page 265.

loss of the one the most near and dear to me on earth. I was in great distress, yet I never entertained the idea of seeking consolation in spiritual intercourse. Indeed, I knew not even of its existence. I had been for years a mere man of the world. I knew nothing of animal magnetism. I had once, and only once, — and then as a mere matter of curiosity, — seen a clairvoyant. The 'Rochester knockings' I had heard of, but never witnessed; and looked upon the matter, when I thought upon it at all, as one of the fancies of transcendentalism, which, like many others, would have its day and be forgotten.

"At length, through the solicitation of a friend, and more to gratify her and while away a tedious hour than anything else, I was induced to witness an exhibition of spiritual intercourse.

"I saw much to surprise and interest me, and I gave to the subject all the attention I could spare, that I might thoroughly investigate it, and expose the deception, if there was one. I have now continued the investigation for more than a year, and have been careful to keep an accurate record of all I have witnessed.

"As I have progressed, I have found that I was myself becoming, in some measure, a medium; and when alone by myself, without any medium near me, I was receiving communications that were to me, in an eminent degree, interesting. These come to me in different forms. One is, by seeing pictures painted to my mind's eye, as bright, as vivid, and as distinct, as any that my physical vision can convey to the mind."

He proceeds to relate one of his earliest visions, which abounds in beauty and significance. They were continued in several of the first numbers of the Shekinah. Most men of generous or even honest minds will commend Judge E. for boldly espousing an unpopular cause, even while disagreeing with him; and if a man who has attained to so many earthly honors from his fellowmen, by the spontaneous voice of the people, will dare thus to be honest, it is the surest guaranty that he is not the man to yield to blind impulse or party feeling in any of his acts; yet it is but

yesterday, as it were, that his judicial character was called in question by a portion of the press for no other reason than his belief on a matter purely of a religious nature — the manner and facts of future existence — not questioning any decision, but declaring that a man of such a religious belief *could not* properly adjudicate a case.

It would be impossible to state particulars in regard to the spread of spiritualism in New York up to the present time. It has become diffused throughout the city, and has almost ceased to be a curiosity or a wonder to any. Public meetings are regularly held, and the investigation is constantly going on; but the days of excitement on the subject have passed away, and all parties look upon it as, at least, something more than a mere trick. It is true that religious bigotry denounces it, but without disputing the occurrences, and occasionally a pretended exposé is made for purposes of speculation; but the fact of spiritual intercourse has become an acknowledged fact in the empire city.

The first regular organization of a society for the diffusion of Spiritual Knowledge took place in New York on the 10th day of June, 1854. The history of the movement is somewhat peculiar. It purported to be a national organization; but it was a singular fact that the time and place of meeting were kept a profound secret, except to a chosen few, who met and formed the society. Even the editor of the Spiritual Telegraph, a paper that had been a pioneer in the spiritual movement, was not allowed to know of the meeting until the proceedings were published in the New York Herald and other papers of the city. It is not my province to comment on the course taken by a small portion of the spiritualists thus to ursurp the authority to speak for the whole body, but to make a record of the facts.

In the selection of officers there is a strange absence of names of old and tried friends, — the earliest and most experienced in the investigation, — and quite a display of learned professions and great names.

CHARTER OF THE SOCIETY FOR THE DIFFUSION OF SPIRITUAL KNOWLEDGE.

"The undersigned, being of full age, citizens of the United States, and a majority of whom being citizens of the State of New York, and being desirous to associate themselves for benevolent, charitable, and missionary purposes, have made, signed and acknowledged, the following certificate in writing, pursuant to the statute passed April 12, 1848:

"The undersigned therefore certify —

"*First.* That the name or title by which the Society shall be known in law shall be 'The Society for the Diffusion of Spiritual Knowledge.'

"*Secondly.* That the business and objects of the Society shall be —

"1. The diffusion of the knowledge of the phenomena and principles of Spiritualism.

"2. The defence and protection of believers and inquirers in the freedom of thought and inquiry against all opposition and oppression.

"3. The relief of the suffering, the distressed, and the erring, so far as to enable them to lead pure and upright lives.

"*Thirdly.* The number of Trustees shall be twelve; and

Nathaniel P. Tallmadge,	Horace H. Day,
Edward F. Bullard,	George T. Dexter,
Joshua F. Laning,	Stephen M. Allen,
Owen G. Warren,	John W. Edmonds,
Charles C. Woodman,	George H. Jones,
Nathaniel E. Wood,	Gilbert Sweet,

shall be the Trustees for the first year.

"All which we do hereby certify, pursuant to the statute in such case made and provided.

N. P. Tallmadge,	J. W. Edmonds,
Nathaniel E. Wood,	George T. Dexter.
E. F. Bullard,	

"New York, June 10, 1854."

ADDRESS OF THE SOCIETY FOR THE DIFFUSION OF SPIRITUAL KNOWLEDGE, TO THE CITIZENS OF THE UNITED STATES.

"But a few short years ago, in an obscure locality, and under circumstances which seemed to warrant the belief in an early termination of the so-called dream, Spiritualism, in its present form, was born. Its few advocates, in the early days of its life, were looked upon as lunatic — were despised for their faith; and men of respectability and standing in society could hardly be found who were willing to examine into the facts connected with the alleged phenomena, for fear of the reproach of the entire unbelieving community. Since that period, Spiritualism has extended with a rapidity unprecedented in the annals of the world, until, to-day, it has become a respectable power in society. Men whose education and whose genius have fitted them for occupying the highest stations, either in politics or in the church, have sacrificed all positions of earthly aggrandizement for the sake of what they believe to be the enjoyment of high and holy truth. Connected with that movement to-day are many hundreds and thousands of men who are respected by their neighbors for their integrity and worth, esteemed and loved by their friends for their many amiable qualities. The subject has arrested the attention of the learned all over this land, and in many other lands. It has produced books for and against. Many of the publications on both sides of the question are marked by ability and strength.

"Within the last two years Spiritualism has increased in strength and stature with a growth unprecedented in the history of mental giants. If it be a lie, there is every prospect of its enveloping this world, and, by its weight, sinking this world one degree lower in the depth of degradation. If it be a lie, it has come in so lovely a garb, that men will seek it unless they be warned by a strong voice; men will flee to it as though it were an angel sent from heaven, will become enveloped in its false light, and will be borne down to death by the weight of its false glory. If it be a lie, ye men of America, who have one thought toward the good of your fellows, it is your duty to come forward

as one man to tear the veil from the face of the lie, and expose it in all its hideousness. We challenge you as men — as earnest men, as men desiring the good of your fellows — to come forth and meet us in the fight, expose our errors, draw the shroud away, and enable the world to see us as we are. We challenge you to come and do that thing.

"We believe that spirituality is a heaven-born truth. We profess to know that angels from heaven — that the spirits of good men progressing toward perfection have come here upon the earth we stand on, and talked with us face to face, and uttered words to us bearing the impress of their divine origin. We sincerely believe this. We are respectable men; we do not believe ourselves to be insane. We ask you to come and meet us, and discuss the question with us; to examine these facts which we allege, and to prove, if you are able, either that these facts never did occur, or that their origin is other than that which it purports to be.

"We come before you in this present shape to show you to what a height the giant has attained. We come to you in this present shape to show you who are spiritualists — who are the madmen in this world, who believe themselves to be the really clear-minded and sane men of this world. In this movement which we have commenced we believe we are the humble instruments in the hands of higher powers for the production of great results. We are proud of the posts we occupy. We are not ashamed to present our names for your consideration. We are not ashamed to meet you on an equal platform as men, and talk with you on this subject.

"Citizens of the United States! we feel authority for saying that the day for raising the cry of humbug, chicanery, delusion, has passed away forever. You know — all of you who have reflective minds — that the application of these terms to this subject can no longer produce results, but rather that these invectives, launched at your supposed enemies, will rebound upon yourselves, and cover you with weakness. Your professed teachers, your men

in high places, the learned of your universities, the eloquent of your pulpits, have dealt in them long enough. And what results have they achieved? The theories which the universities sent forth to account for the alleged phenomena, as they were pleased to term them, have not only rendered their authors, but the universities, ridiculous in the minds of intelligent men. All the theories which they reared have crumbled to the dust, and their authors cannot shake that dust from off their clothing. It will cling to them so long as they stand upon this earth, and longer still.

"Your pulpits — and we speak kindly when we speak of them, for they have a holy office, whether they perform that office or no — your pulpits have launched forth invectives. The cry of delusion and chicanery has been heard all over the land; but that was some time ago. It produced no effect, except upon the churches themselves; and that course was abandoned. Policy was now adopted; another plan was accepted as the true one for accounting for the spiritual manifestations, and which has been promulgated, not only from the pulpits, but by the religious press of this country, namely, that evil spirits have visited the earth still further to delude deluded mortals. What pity! what pity! They have ascertained that! Their sermons, their published communications, contain that assertion from their high dignitaries. It is very strange, if they believe this thing, — that evil spirits can come to do evil on this earth, — that good spirits will not be permitted by the good God also to come upon this earth to effect good purposes! We profess to believe both these propositions. We leave you to examine the subject for yourselves. And we can tell you, one and all, if you will render your minds receptive to the truth, and will engage in the investigation of this subject, it will appear as clear as light in the noonday that spirits, both good and evil, do come here upon the earth, among their friends, and relatives, and acquaintances, and affinities, and teach them good things and bad; for this is true. We say, then, reflect, ponder on

these things; investigate, and, as you shall decide, so shall be your progress here, and your everlasting progress hereafter.

President.

Gov. Nathaniel P. Tallmadge, Wisconsin.

Vice-Presidents.

Chief Justice Joseph Williams, Iowa.
Judge Willie P. Fowler, Kentucky.
Judge R. P. Spaulding, Ohio.
Judge Charles H. Larrabee, Wisconsin.
Horace H. Day, New York.
Hon. Warren Chase, Wisconsin.
Dr. David Cory, Illinois.
Gen. Edward F. Bullard, New York.
Hon. Richard D. Davis, New York.
Dr. George T. Dexter, New York.
Major George W. Raines, U. S. A.
E. W. Bailey, Pennsylvania.
Phineas E. Gay, Massachusetts.

Secretaries.

Owen G. Warren, Architect, New York.
Selah G. Perkins, M. D., Vermont.
Charles C. Woodman, Editor, New York.

Treasurer.

Nathaniel E. Wood, Chemist, New York.

Board of Trustees.

Nathaniel P. Tallmadge, Counsellor at Law, Wisconsin.
John W. Edmonds, Counsellor at Law, New York.
Horace H. Day, Merchant, New York.
Edward F. Bullard, Counsellor at Law, New York.
George T. Dexter, Physician, New York.
Joshua F. Laning, Merchant, Pennsylvania.
Stephen M. Allen, Merchant, Massachusetts.

Owen G. Warren, Architect, New York.
Charles C. Woodman, Editor, New York.
George H. Jones, Merchant, New York.
Nathaniel E. Wood, Chemist, New York.
Gilbert Sweet, Merchant, New York.

Board of Advisers.

Harrison Bliss, Merchant, Massachusetts.
Lyman L. Curtiss, Merchant, New York.
C. C. Bristol, Editor, New York.
Thomas G. Young, Editor, New York.
E. A. King, Postmaster, Ohio.
Benjamin Urner, Merchant, Ohio.
Addison Smith, Merchant, Ohio.
A. Miltenberger, Merchant, Missouri.
P. E. Bland, Counsellor at Law, Missouri.
George Haskell, M. D., Illinois.
John Howarth, Merchant, Massachusetts.
Amos Rogers, Manufacturer, New York.
John W. Fowler, Professor, New York.
Cranstoun Laurie, City of Washington.
John J. Viele, Counsellor at Law, New York.
Elisha Waters, Merchant, New York.
J. Tanner, Physician, Maryland."

CHAPTER IX.

MANIFESTATIONS IN BOSTON — THE FIRST MEDIUM — SPIRITUAL PHILOSOPHER — POSITION OF THE PRESS — LA ROY SUNDERLAND — CREDULITY — SHADRACH BARNES AND PHEBE NEWELL — REACTION — STATEMENT OF RUFUS ELMER — REV. WM. M. FERNALD — JOHN M. SPEAR — THE NEW MOTIVE POWER, &C.

THE first we heard of the manifestations in Boston was at the house of a lady by the name of Lysene W. Dickinson, said to be of most excellent character and correct deportment. I learned little of the particular manifestations with her, but I am informed by the *Spiritual Philosopher*, vol. i., No. 1, published in July, 1850, that, the first Mrs. D. knew of it, the rapping commenced in their room, where no one was present but her daughter. They were both exceedingly frightened, and, after searching the room for the cause, Mrs. D. became impressed with the idea that it was spiritual, and entreated them to cease, which request they very kindly complied with. The raps were made on the doors, and on the sides of the room, in different parts of the house, and under circumstances which left no room to doubt but that the noises were caused by superhuman agency. Mr. Sunderland also mentions that they were heard occasionally at other places in Boston at about the same time.

The first medium that made any considerable excitement in Boston was a married daughter of Mr. Sunderland, Mrs. Margaretta S. Cooper. At first the sounds were very slight, and it was with considerable difficulty that people could decide when they were really spiritual. They soon increased in volume, and many very singular and important manifestations occurred in her presence.

They commenced in June, 1850, and were not confined to rappings, but exhibited all the varied phenomena that had attended the other media.

In the month of July, of the same year, Mr. Sunderland commenced the publication of a paper called the "SPIRITUAL PHILOSOPHER," which very essentially aided in spreading a knowledge of what was passing on this subject in various parts of the country. The paper was not very well supported, and, after being published, with some interruptions, until December, 1851, its publication was suspended.

In Boston, as in New York, the press was ready to denounce the whole thing as a vile imposture, and Mr. Sunderland, as well as all who were the friends of even an impartial examination of the subject, were denounced in the most bitter terms. Mr. Sunderland very soon made arrangements for regular sittings, for the accommodation of all who wished to investigate the mysteries of the "rappings," and other manifestations. For a time he had many visitors, who were generally satisfied that Mrs. Cooper did not produce these phenomena, and many were as well satisfied that they emanated from spirits.

Mr. Sunderland had long been known as a writer and lecturer on Pathetism and Human Magnetism, and a very successful operator in both. This circumstance produced suspicion in the minds of many that magnetism, clairvoyance, or "pathetism," had something to do, in his case, in producing these mysterious effects; but time and investigation, as well as the spread of media in Boston and vicinity, soon dissipated such suspicions. That he was an enthusiast, none can doubt who knows his temperament, and has kept an eye on his course for the last twenty years. His ardent temperament would hardly allow him to take a half-way, or even moderate, position on any subject. At first he was quite sure that all communications through *his* medium were from the true source. Time and experience taught him that they were not all good; and, if I mistake not, his extreme mind has now vibrated to the other extreme, and he thinks there is nothing good or

reliable. If I understand his position, as exhibited in his "Book of Human Nature," it is, that they are all insane or idiot, or a coarser and less spiritual grade, and there is no kind of confidence to be placed in any of the communications. In order to give an idea of his position on this subject, I quote from some of his writings and experiences. I would not magnify any individual into importance; but, for a time, Mr. S. occupied quite a conspicuous place among the Boston spiritualists, and has written so much as to make his opinions a part of the spiritual history of the times.

In July, 1850, he writes as follows: "In relation to communications from the spirit-world, addressed to man's external senses, it is certain the present age will form an epoch in the history of the race. It is the period to which generations long since passed away had been reaching forward. 'Prophets and kings waited long, but died without the sight.' It is nature's approaching maturity; the proximity of the human to the spiritual; the transition from the angular to the circular, from discord to concord, and from the spiritual to the celestial! O, heavenly thought! Thus is man attracted from the low and earthly to the high and heavenly; and be this our mission, to assist, as we may, in this great work of human progress. To harmonize the discordant, to inspire love where there is hatred, to give light where there is darkness, to make smooth the rough places, and in man's organic, vital, and spiritual systems perfect that which is wanting, to make his labor light, and supply his mind with that without which his spirit cannot go 'on to perfection.'

"Our columns shall ever be open for communications from the good and the true, of the different sects in religion, from every school in medicine, all parties in politics, and each world in the constitution of the universe. Especially shall they be open for the influx of goodness and truth from the SPHERES above, between which and our earth audible, *tangible*, *ocular* communications have now been commenced. And may we not hope that 'the *day* has now broken never to close?' Henceforth, in a sense in which

it never could be said before, 'the tabernacle of God is with men, and shall dwell with them.' Yes, O, yes, here in the midst of the spirits of the departed! *The good and the true*, having cast off the outer form, the spirits of our brothers, our sisters, our fathers and mothers, our children, mingle in our presence, and attract us to the contemplation of those bright mansions where they exult in their beatific vision. Welcome, thrice welcome, *happy, happy spirits!* As you attract us *from discord, and error, and evil*, and death, we call on you to come! As you instruct us into a knowledge of our future selves; as you aid us in comprehending our true manhood and destiny; as you *unite and harmonize us in the love of goodness and truth;* as you show us the nature of death, which we are not to fear, and the life we are yet to live, both in this sphere and the world above, we dedicate these columns to you! * * * * Through these pages, then, shall congenial minds commune, and spirits mingle from the world above with their loved friends in the sphere below. And, beholding *the beauty, the justice, the harmony* and happiness, of the innumerable societies which make up the spheres above, we shall thus *learn how to arrange human society, how to attract all from discord, oppression, evil, error, imperfection, and suffering*, to a state on earth resembling that above, where there is sufficiency, health, unity, happiness, and heaven."*

With so exalted an opinion as this of the manifestations, in their infancy, it would not be wonderful if Mr. Sunderland was somewhat misled, and much disappointed, at finding such a variety in the character and value of the communications; although, in his paper of the same date, he says he does not believe "that communications from disembodied spirits are *truthful per se*."

Some time subsequent to this, in a letter written to the author, from Rochester, N. Y. (dated August 15th, 1850), he says, after speaking of his interview with the spirits at Auburn and Rochester, "Gracious God! if it were for this only that I was born, I

* Spiritual Philosopher, vol. i., No. 1.

must bless thee for my existence! * * * My heaven will be where such spirits are." It is not that Mr. Sunderland thought, for any great length of time, that *all* was truth, that I quote him so much, but that his "Book of Human Nature" takes the extreme ground of a total want of reliability and identity.

In September, 1850, he writes:* "I had frequently had *manifestations* when alone, since last June, but no audible *answers* to questions till each member of my family happened to be present. Then, asking my children to respond, the oldest did so, *audibly*, for an hour or so, upon the *cradle*, around which the family circle was formed! As if the precious spirit of our child, having left the cradle for the grave, would come back and announce his presence by a rap as upon the very place where his fond parents last gazed upon his infantile features, when smitten by the hand of death! The consolation thus afforded us may be imagined, but described it cannot be."

I have, I think, sufficiently shown that Mr. Sunderland did then feel satisfied both of the identity and the goodness of the spirits he was in communication with. I might add that he often expressed himself as being surrounded by approving spirits while writing articles on spiritual subjects. The following is a specimen: "We have been favored with spiritual manifestations, addressed to the sense of *hearing* and *feeling*, almost every day since the 14th of June last. 'Raps' have been made, in our study at home and in our office in Boston, upon the sides of the room, and upon the back of our desk, where we are now writing. We had repeated 'raps' while writing the article in our last number, 'Historical and Explanatory,' approving of the views we gave of the philosophy of the spiritual communications, now in process of development, to man's external senses. We have had some *peculiar* manifestations from the spirits of our children, during the night, which have brought us to consciousness from sound sleep. Manifestations have been made in our public lectures, though extended indiscriminately to the entire audience.

* Spiritual Philosopher, vol. i., No. 4.

"Then again, 'responses' have been made to us, through our own *family circle*, not one of which ever saw or heard responses through any other person. All the other mediums, of which we have any knowledge, had the responses promised, by being put in *personal communication* with the Fox family, or some one who had communicated with that family."* In his first announcement of Mrs. Cooper's becoming a medium, he says: "And how gratifying, how pleasant, how heavenly, to find our own family thus taken possession of, as it were, by the Heavenly Hosts! O, how insignificant is all earthly good, when compared to this privilege! At our table, during meal times, by day and night, thus to be permitted to hold open communion with the spirit-world!" †

In the same paper, in an article full of high-sounding ecstatic words, under the head of "To my Spiritual Children," he speaks of his spirit being "swelled with emotions of satisfaction when I was told by 'hosts of spirits' at Auburn (N. Y.), August 9, 1850, that they had often been present at my lectures, in Boston, Philadelphia, New York, Providence, and other places; attracted by the approach of those spirits whom I had pathetized into a state of TRANCE. This state of trance (*as I was assured by spirits of the upper spheres*), that very state of trance, into which I had pathetized thousands who had attended my lectures in different parts of the country, was the *nearest possible approach to the spirit-world.*" ‡ I have also been present when Mr. Sunderland contended strongly that there was no kind of danger in being deceived as to identity of spirits, and when he even exhibited considerable vexation at being contradicted on this point. He was at that time trying to convince a lady of Providence that the spirit of her sister was communicating with her, when she could get no proof of such identity.

At a still later date he gives a specific account of the kind of manifestations at his house as follows:

"1. The mysterious sounds have been made in nearly *all the*

* Spiritual Philosopher, vol. i., p. 58. † Ibid. ‡ Ibid. p. 59.

rooms of our house (some twenty), and have been heard at different times by different people.

"2. They have been made, *spontaneously*, in all parts of the house often, by day and night.

"3. Articles of *furniture* have been moved often, and at times with considerable force.

"4. The spirits have made *musical sounds*, which we have heard, and know were not made by any human power.

"5. The members of our family, and strangers present, have been often *touched* and handled (so to speak) by the spirits.

"6. Manifestations have been made by spirits to our sense of *sight*.

"7. The responses to questions are made freely, *at our table*, during meal times, which are thus prolonged often to an hour and a half by conversation with our heavenly visitants. When my family all become seated at our table, at meal times, the spirits 'rap' spontaneously, without being called upon, to let us know they are present.

"8. We have never asked for responses in our *Family Circle* without receiving them. They come through Mrs. Margaretta S. Cooper generally; but we have had responses also through our second daughter, Sarah Mercena, and also through our grandchild, *Mrs. Cooper's babe, only two months old.* Taking the child in my arms, when no one else was near, we have had responses through it, and which the spirits themselves assured us were made through that medium.

"9. All the *promises* ever made to me by spirits (except one at Stratford made in jest), have been fulfilled.

"10. Communications have been vouchsafed to us, as we believe, from the *higher spheres*, giving *important information* relating more or less to the Spiritual Dispensation now opening to the universe of human beings.

* * * * * *

"I can only say my heart is full, and had I ten thousand tongues it seems as if I could use them all in blessing the *angelic hosts*

who have thus taken possession of my earthly sphere! I now enjoy a *heaven* far more *real* than any I had ever been taught to anticipate by the old and discordant theology out of which I am now conscious of being so completely redeemed."*

Again: "The Spiritual Philosopher was originated in the spirit-world, and is conducted under the direct supervision and advice of hosts of friends in the first, second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh spheres above. *It belongs to the spirit-world*, and is the first paper ever published, expressly designed for giving 'responses' from the higher spheres of intelligence above." †

The consequence of such credulity, was, as might be expected, to lead the person possessing it into many disagreeable and embarrassing positions, occasioning much ridicule of the whole spiritual theory, and making it even bear the color of design. Take the following as a prominent instance: A writer in the *New York Express*, calling himself Shadrach Barnes, in February, 1851, undertook the task of "exposing" the mysteries, and for that purpose set a trap into which Mr. Sunderland walked with all the simplicity of an unsophisticated boy. He wrote a letter, of which the following is a copy, *verbatim, et literatim, et punctuatim.*

"respected sur I send one dollar if you please ut have some questions respecting of my daughter which departed this lif january the 19, 1851 i brot her up from a child she was a daughter too me her name is mary ellen Perkins, and was 19 when she dide my mind is exercised very much in respect of her state of mind in a religious point of view which if you communion with Spirits in the other world she was flitey and out of her head as the poet sais afflictions soar long time she bore physician was in vain send me a letter i want to hear if her state of mind is happy no more at present. PHEBE NEWELL.

"new Yorc sity feb, the 31st 1851.

"mr laroy Sunderland"

* Spiritual Philosopher, vol. i., p. 69. † Ibid. 89.

In this letter Shadrach enclosed a dollar to pay for the information, and in due course of mail he received the following answer:

"Eliot-street, Boston, Mass.
"Half-past ten o'clock, A. M., Feb. 15, 1851.

"My Sister Dear: I have this moment laid your letter before the spirits, and received the following answer: 'Tell her Mary is happy, and with her dear mother Newell all the time. I watch over her for good; and I love her now more than ever. I will be near her, and stand by her when she reads your answer. She must not grieve. I will soon make sounds in her presence when she is alone, which she can hear, when she will know it is me.'

"And I understand the spirits to say that you are not her own mother, but she loved you as her own, and she said she came here to tell what to say to you when I answered your letter. In the sphere where Mary has gone none are miserable, but all are happy as they can be. Yours truly,

"La Roy Sunderland.

"P. S. — It is not often that I attempt an answer to letters like yours, but I suppose I was attracted to Mary's sweet spirit to gratify you. She has stood by me while writing, as I believe.

"L. S."

The discerning reader will have supposed by this time that "Phebe" was wholly a fictitious person, and the whole done to entrap Sunderland; and it succeeded. The exultation of the opponents of spiritualism was almost beyond bounds; the story was eagerly caught up by the press, and it had a great "run." It was in vain that it was attempted to be explained by the law of affinity, for Shadrach was not with the medium to call discordant spirits around. He was in New York, and Sunderland in Boston. It was a just cause of ridicule by the opponents, and they could not be blamed for the use they made of it. Mr. Sunderland's folly was in keeping the dollar and attempting an answer; and his

error probably was in supposing that he was aided and attended by the sweet spirit of "Mary Ellen Perkins." He did not even pretend that he had a medium present, other than himself, and his anxiety, for some reason, to answer the good pious old lady favorably, produced an unfavorable effect on his imagination, leading him to *imagine* that the sweet spirit was with him, when there was really no such thing. This, at least, is the charitable construction, and I feel inclined, even in such a case, to "lean to the side of mercy," as the law expresses it. The reader can weigh the testimony, and judge whether this is a sufficient excuse for the extraordinary affair.

It must not be inferred, from the above case, that Mr. Sunderland had no genuine spiritual communications in his family. That he did have, and that some most remarkable proofs of spirit power took place with Mrs. Cooper as medium, I have abundant testimony from numerous and well-known individuals who visited him. This proof comes not only by published letters, but by private ones, which I have received from his visitors. In regard to his own *impressions* there is some little room to doubt. One of the most erroneous of these impressions was the idea he had fallen into that, with *him* and *his* medium, no false answers were ever received. That this was his early impression the extracts abundantly show, and he so declared it in my presence and that of others. The above unfortunate affair was the result of such confidence.

Another effect was that he vibrated to the other extreme, and lost confidence in the communications generally. He, however, investigated with much perseverance, even after he came to this conclusion, and gave the result of his opinions in a volume, containing much interesting matter on this and various subjects connected with the bodily and spiritual development of man.* I deem this work decidedly the closest criticism of the "spirits" that has yet appeared, characterized by some slight tinge of that bitterness of disappointment which appeared in some of his articles

* Book of Human Nature. New York. Stearns & Co., 1853.

in the "Philosopher," but less of jealousy and personal feeling than there exhibited.*

But as Mr. S. and his family were the pioneers of spiritualism in Boston, I give some of the opinions of disinterested visitors and comments of the press on the occurrences at his house. The following is from the *Daily Mail* of Sept. 20th, 1850:

"INTERVIEW WITH SPIRITS.

"MR. EDITOR: Perhaps it will interest your readers if you will allow me to recount to them some of the wonders which I witnessed last week, in a series of interviews with what are claimed to be 'spirits.' On Wednesday evening I very gladly accepted an invitation from my friend, Mr. La Roy Sunderland, to witness the rappings at his office in Boston. After several gentlemen, who, with myself, were thorough unbelievers, had intimately examined every part of the room, furniture, &c., we were requested to form a circle round the table. Mr. Sunderland then stated that his daughter, through whom the spirits usually responded, was not present, and he should be obliged to put several of those around the table in a state of trance, and then see if he could get the spirits to communicate through them. This he accomplished, and they commenced calling the spirits of their departed friends. They were soon answered by the 'raps,' which I heard distinctly, and which appeared to be produced under the table, at different points. I placed my hands upon the table — being the only person who touched it at all, and felt the vibrations corresponding to the raps. Numerous questions were correctly answered.

"Mr. Sunderland asked the spirit of his departed son, by my request, if the spirit of my daughter was present, and was answered that it was. This daughter was one at whose death a singular phenomenon was witnessed by several persons, and which I only

* See an article from Mr. S.'s own pen, signed F., in Spiritual Philosopher, v. ii., p. 168. Also p. 170.

allude to to recall it to the memory of those who knew of it at the time. It was some time before I could muster faith and courage enough to interrogate *somebody* who appeared to be *nobody*. I finally asked if the spirit of my daughter was present, and would respond to me, and was astonished to hear something respond promptly, with a different sound from any I had hitherto heard. I asked her several questions, which I very well knew no one present but myself knew how to answer, and was answered with uniform correctness. What purported to be the spirit of my daughter told me that the halo of light which filled the darkened room at the time of her death was spiritual maifestation.

"On Thursday evening I visited Mr. Sunderland's house in Charlestown. Mr. S. was not at home, but his excellent family told me that, if I wished to hear the rappings, I could hear them. Mr. Sunderland's daughter, through whom the spirits respond, is a married lady, and was sitting by the cradle with a young child in her arms.

"After I had examined the cradle, floor, &c., we formed a circle around the cradle. Some one asked if the spirits were present, and was immediately answered by the raps on the cradle, much louder than those I had heard the night before. During the evening we had many of the manifestations which have so frequently been described as having occurred at Rochester, Auburn, New York city, &c.

"On Friday I called on Mr. Sunderland, at his office in Boston, and expressed a desire to *test* these things in the daytime. He very kindly accompanied me to his house, where he, his daughter and myself, seated ourselves around the cradle. After I had faithfully examined it, and everything about it, as well as everything about the room, the questions and responding commenced. Mr. S. stated previously, however, that he would go into another room in the house, if it would be any more satisfactory, or to any room in any neighboring house; but I was satisfied in regard to this. I put questions in every possible way, — ques-

tions which I had fixed upon as *tests*, — all of which were promptly and correctly answered.

"Having been placed in communication with what assumed to be the spirit of my daughter, I asked her to tell me how old she was when she died, and to signify the number when I mentioned it. I commenced and called the numbers above and below the real one, in every variety of manner, until, at last, calling the real one, the answer was made promptly. She also told me how old her brother was when he died. These two facts I knew were known to no one, within a hundred miles, except myself. Then the being who claimed to be the spirit of my daughter, by the use of the alphabet, spelled out, '*My father, I love you.*' I asked her if she had any message to send to her mother. She replied in the same manner, '*Tell mother I am happy.*'

"Mr. Sunderland, being partially deaf, requested the spirit of his little son to rap louder. I then saw the cradle move some three inches, although no visible hand touched it. Mr. S. asked if his son would communicate by sight instead of sound, moving the cradle as the means, and was answered that he would. I took up the cradle, examined it and the floor in every possible way, without finding any apparent means by which it could be moved. I afterwards saw it move more than fifty times, and once at least six inches.

"Now, as the preacher says, 'with a few remarks I close.' And, first, allow me to say that, as the fear or the odium of being considered a fanatic will not shock my nerves very much, I do not hesitate to say that there was no deception, fraud or trick, about the 'rappings' I witnessed. I think I know Mr. Sunderland and his family to be truthful and worthy people; and I do not believe, under the circumstances, that they could have deceived me, if they had attempted it. I do not *know* that these mysterious responses were spiritual; but to believe any explanation I have yet heard would require a larger tax upon my credulity than it would to believe they are what they assume to be. I certainly have no objection to urge against the establishment of a telegraphic com-

munication between those in the body and those out of it; for I have no religious creed, and belong to no party which would be likely to suffer from such a communication. It would clash with no article of my faith, nor would it effect me unpleasantly in any manner.

"Mr. Sunderland is now perseveringly investigating this subject and giving the result of his investigations in his 'Spiritual Philosopher.' He believes his children are all together, — four in the body and two out, — and that the latter are around him, touching him so that he can feel them, and communicating with him in a variety of ways. He says that he *knows* they thus communicate.

"A word more. If what has been heard, seen and felt, be really produced by departed spirits, I see no reason for attempting to build upon it a new system of theology, and for denying the truth of the Bible and everything we have heretofore considered sacred. 'Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits, and see whether they be of God.' RUFUS ELMER.

"Springfield, Mass., Sept. 17, 1850."

During the same month the Boston *Pathfinder* gave the details of a visit to Mr. Sunderland's, in which he fully sustains the other witnesses in the statement that there was evidently no fraud in the case. Rev. Wm. M. Fernald, a Unitarian preacher of some note, became a convert from visiting Mr. Sunderland, and defended it through some of the daily papers of the city. He also wrote a good deal in the "Spiritual Philosopher," and distinguished himself as an advocate of Spiritualism, and for the numerous and very sudden changes of his opinions in regard to the subject of good and evil spirits, &c.

Like all other places in the country, the number of media increased rapidly in Boston, and the manifestations assumed all the variety that had attended them elsewhere. Mrs. Hayden, wife of Wm. R. Hayden, Esq., editor of the "Star-Spangled Banner," became a medium, and for a long time the meetings held at Mr. Hayden's were by confidential friends, and were not known to

the public. I have now in my possession letters from a distinguished literary man of that city, who used to meet in that circle, and, although he is a full believer, it is not yet publicly known. He is now the editor of a daily political paper. Mr. Hayden and his wife have since made a tour to England, where they made many converts to spiritualism, and elicited much discussion on the subject.

Still later, Rev. John M. Spear, a distinguished philanthropist and Universalist clergyman, became a medium for writing and impressions. Some of his impressions were very remarkable. One case, which has already been published, has scarcely a parallel in modern times. He was impressed to go to a place some twenty miles distant, to see a man who was a total stranger to him. He at first resisted the impression, when his hand moved and wrote the following:

"You must go to Abington to-morrow night. You will be wanted there. Call on Mr. David Viney. Go with your horse and chaise, and leave Boston at two o'clock precisely. That will bring you where you will be wanted in season. Go by the way of A. Do not fear to do as you are guided. All will be well. Tell sister B. I will watch over you while you are from home. She shall see good come of this direction, and will be satisfied with it when you get home from your journey. I am your friend, and will protect you from all danger, and will lead you safely and pleasantly home. David Viney lives in Abington. You do not know him. It is not your brother-in-law in H., of whom you have been thinking since you have been impressed to write this communication. He lives near D. H.'s house. I shall impress you again to-morrow to go. Go, — go, — go.

"Oliver."

The next day the injunction was repeated, with still more earnestness and assurance of being wanted there. He finally complied and started as directed. On arriving at A., and inquiring for Viney, he was told that such a man was living some three miles from there. The next morning he found the man, who was sitting

up, but suffering extremely, with his head and face bound up. The conversation very naturally turned on the complaint, and while the man was relating how he had suffered with neuralgia, and how he had been deprived of sleep for two weeks, Mr. Spear's hand was slowly and involuntarily raised to the sick man's face, and gently touched him with the tips of his fingers near the ear. The sick man started suddenly, and, raising his leg from the floor with both his hands, exclaimed: "What did you do to my leg, sir?"

"Nothing at all. I unconsciously touched your face, but cannot tell why; but I certainly did not touch your leg," said Mr. Spear.

"But I am sure you did," replied Mr. Viney, "for I felt it all over me."

"Well," said Spear, "I guess it is all right, although there is some mystery about it. It is probably all for the best."

Mr. Viney then demanded of Mr. Spear who he was, and what he came for; but the only reply was that his name was Spear, but he could not tell what he came for. Another involuntary touch from Mr. S.'s fingers produced another shock in the leg, and drove away all the pain. The family and the sick man himself became alarmed, and, becoming sleepy, wished Mr. Spear to leave the house, so that he could go to sleep, as he dare not sleep while such a mysterious man was in his house. Mr. Spear, having nothing more to do, departed, and the man entirely recovered.

Many other journeys of a like character were made by Mr. Spear with like success, seemingly guided by the healing angels to perform these works of goodness and kindness to his fellow-men. They certainly look like anything but the works of his Satanic Majesty.

On the other hand, Mr. S. has written some things, claiming to be from the spirit of Dr. Rush, which are of the most puerile character, partaking almost of the ludicrous. Take for instance the following:

"In speaking of the mortal body, it will be (all things considered) wisest to commence at what (looking at all things) may be considered the most, or, more strictly speaking, the more important part, and that is the head.

"In the front part, just below the eyes, there is what is generally called by the common people, a nose. And here it will be perceived are two apartments." *

This is but a specimen of much that was written through this medium, and many other equally honest "media." I do not attempt to account for these puerile communications, coming through intelligent media, and purporting to come from great men. I only state the facts for the reflection of those who study the history of these remarkable phenomena.

Among some of the hasty conclusions to which many of the over-zealous friends of spiritualism have arrived, none seem to me to present a stronger case than that of what was termed the "new motive power." The reader will get some idea of its origin by the following account which appeared in the Boston "New Era," June 29th, 1854. The story is certainly a very singular one, and should not be varied from the way it was originally told. It is as follows:

"1. It was announced to Mrs. ———, by spiritual intelligence, several months since, that she would become a mother in some new sense; that she would be 'the Mary of a new dispensation.' The announcement was given under circumstances the most impressive, and in connection with a most beautiful and instructive vision, in which was strikingly elucidated a most important spiritual lesson, namely, the true significance of the *cross*, as an emblem of spiritual advancement. All who were present on the occasion were deeply impressed with the superior capacities and exalted moral attainments of the intelligences communicating, as evidenced by the profound and comprehensive character of their teachings. Nevertheless, the prophecy or announcement spoken

* Lectures, &c. John M. Spear, medium.

of, though declared with marked emphasis, and directed to be put on record, was not believed to have any peculiar meaning. It was thought to refer possibly to the maternal feeling which she had felt toward individuals, who had, through her instrumentality, been instructed in the truths of the new philosophy. Least of all was there the slightest hint that it had any relation whatever to the mechanism then constructing at High Rock. No one connected with that enterprise was present, and nothing was known of this declaration by them until it was recalled by the events which subsequently transpired.

"2. Previously to this, Mrs. ——— had for some time experienced certain sensations and agonies similar to those attendant upon gestation. Subsequently these indications gradually increased, until they at length became very marked and inexplicable, and presented some very singular characteristics. They were supposed, however, to be at least partially indicative of disease; but were not imagined to have the remotest connection with either the mechanism at High Rock, or with the prophecy which has been alluded to. As the crisis approached, a variety of singular events, from apparently independent causes (which cannot be narrated here), seemed to point to some unusual result, though all failed to give any person cognizant of them the slightest apprehension of the nature of that result.

"3. At length a request came, through the instrumentality of J. M. Spear, that on a certain day she would visit the tower at High Rock. No one in the flesh — herself least of all — had any conception of the object of this visit. When there, however (suitable preparations having been carefully made by superior direction, though their purpose was incomprehensible), she began to experience the peculiar and agonizing sensations of parturition, differing somewhat from the ordinary experience, inasmuch as the throes were *internal*, and of the *spirit* rather than of the physical nature, but nevertheless quite as uncontrollable, and not less severe than those pertaining to the latter. This extraordinary physical phenomenon continued for about the space of two hours. Its purpose

and results were wholly incomprehensible to all but herself; but her own perceptions were clear and distinct that in these agonizing throes the most interior and refined elements of her spiritual being were imparted to, and absorbed by, the appropriate portions of the mechanism—its minerals having been made peculiarly receptive by previous chemical processes. This seemed no more absurd or unphilosophical than the well-known fact that a gold ring, or any other article worn about the person, becomes impregnated to a degree with spiritual emanations, or that the elements of one's being can be and are imparted to an autograph so fully that the character, capacities, &c., may be psychomtrized therefrom.

"4. The result of this phenomenon was, that indications of life or pulsation became apparent in the mechanism; first to her own keenly sensitive touch, and soon after to the eyes of all beholders. These pulsations continued to increase, under a process, which she was impelled to continue for some weeks, precisely analogous to that of nursing (for which preparation had previously been made in her own organization, while she was in utter ignorance of any such design), until at times a very marked and surprising motion resulted.

"5. At every step in these singular transactions, Mrs. ——— has been attended by angelic intelligences (whose presence is perceived by her own interior senses), who have from time to time explained the *rationale* of their proceedings and of her experiences, and unfolded, in various departments of science, philosophy, and morals, principles and truths of the highest practical moment to us and to mankind. These teachings have been, to a great extent, based upon, and elucidated by, the various experiences connected with that mechanism; and they have been not only profound and comprehensive, intellectually considered, but of the highest, purest, and most elevating moral and spiritual character. That these intelligences have infused into her spirit a most beautiful, harmonizing, celestial influence, has been perceived by all who have enjoyed communication with her, and none of these, I feel

assured, will hesitate to indorse the admission that 'she gets a large influx of superior, saving, harmonizing truths.'

"In order to a proper estimate of the peculiar experiences thus described, a large class of correlative physiological and psychological facts, which cannot be even hinted at here, need to be considered by the candid investigator; but the foregoing statements are believed to embrace what is sufficient for the present purpose, namely, the correction of erroneous statements which have gone abroad.

"With two or three remarks I conclude.

"1. As these experiences were wholly unexpected, and unimagined by the subject of them, until they actually transpired, they could not have been 'psychologically produced.' Her mind did *not* act either in conjunction with other minds, or independent of them, to bring about these results. *Theories* must conform to *facts.*

"2. These experiences were not moulded into the peculiar form they took by any previous religious or theological impressions. Because, first, no impressions of this peculiar character had ever existed; and whatever notions had once been entertained of the miraculous conception of Jesus, had long ago given place to more philosophical conclusions. Secondly. No idea of such results had ever been formed in the mind, and hence there existed nothing which could mould these results.

"3. As 'corrupt trees do not bring forth good fruit,' nor 'the same fountain send forth bitter waters and sweet,' it is difficult to believe that an 'influx of superior, saving, harmonizing truths' will flow from delusive or deceptive sources.

"4. Neither Mrs. ——— nor myself can profess to have, as yet, any definite conception as to what this 'new-born child,' the so-called 'Electrical Motor,' is to be. However 'enthusiastic' or 'extravagant' may be the expectations of others, we do not know that we yet at all comprehend the ultimate designs of the intelligences engaged in it. Time will probably solve that matter, and we willingly abide the decision. But the incalculable benefits

which have already accrued to us in the unfoldings of the interior principles of physical and human science, and in leading to higher and purer moral and spiritual attainments, have overwhelmingly compensated for all that it has cost us, whether in means or reputation; and this consideration forces upon our minds and hearts a conviction of the probability, at least, that still further benefit may be realized from the same source.

"Whatever may be the result, therefore, my position is such that neither disappointments nor regrets may ensue; and the friends of Mrs. ——— may be assured that her convictions of duty rest upon a basis which neither the opinions nor the ridicule of the uninformed can affect, while her spirit is serenely sustained against the shafts of calumny and detraction."

Comment on the subject is hardly necessary. Quite a number of persons, of great intelligence, candor and unimpeachable character, fully believed in this second edition of the miraculous conception and birth, and the most unbounded enthusiasm was manifested by many. It was denominated "The New Motive Power, Physical Saviour, Heaven's Last Best Gift to Man, New Creation, The Great Spiritual Revelation of the Age, The Philosopher's Stone, The Art of all Arts, The Science of all Sciences," and various other extravagant epithets were applied to this wonderful new birth. Like many other productions of persons whose zeal outstrips their knowledge, the new-born miracle was not quite practical enough to suit this utilitarian age. Notwithstanding the labor and pains of parturition at and before its birth, a slight defect was discoverable. *The new motor would not move to any purpose!* This was the only drawback on its great benefits to mankind.

The machine itself was constructed at High Rock, Lynn, Mass.; but several of the prominent *accoucheurs* were residents of Boston, and the record is entitled to a place in the Boston chapter.

Like New York and most other places, especially the large

cities, the manifestations soon became too general to attempt any account of each particular medium, or to particularize the different forms of manifestations. The *Spiritual Era*, a weekly paper, has thus far proved one of the most efficient publications among the numerous papers that have, from time to time, been started on this subject, and most of which have ceased for want of support. Public meetings are regularly held in Boston, and a reading-room is provided for strangers who may visit the city and are interested in the subject. The believers are numbered by thousands.

CHAPTER X.

MANIFESTATIONS IN PROVIDENCE, R. I. — EARLY MANIFESTATIONS — IMPORTANT PHYSICAL MANIFESTATIONS IN PRESENCE OF MRS. WILBUR, MEDIUM — STATEMENT OF "D. B. H." — FANATICISM — LETTERS OF MRS. SARAH HELEN WHITMAN.

THE first effort to obtain manifestations in Providence was in September, 1850. It was at the house of D. B. Harris, and there were present Mrs. Sarah Helen Whitman, Clement Webster (editor of the Daily Post), Rev. Mr. Davis, Mrs. R. M. C. Capron, E. W. Capron, Mr. and Mrs. Harris of Providence, and William Fishbough, of Williamsburg, N. Y. The company formed a circle, and endeavored to get the sounds, or sound demonstrations of spiritual presence. This attempt was not successful, or at least no proof of any such influence was presented to the company, although one or two thought they felt the pressure as of hands upon them, as is frequently the case with persons who are in the circle when spirits are communicating.

Towards the end of October of the same year, Mrs. Johnson, a sister of Mr. Webster, visited Mr. Sunderland in Boston, and had a long and interesting communication spelled out, which the spirits directed to be published in the Providence Post, at the same time promising that they would make demonstrations to Mr. W. while preparing the article for the press. Of this Mr. Webster was no way sanguine. The communications purported to come from their father.

Mr. Webster obeyed the directions in regard to the article, and, while engaged in preparing it, he averred that faint but distinct sounds were heard on his writing-table. They were quite

loud while his arm rested on the table, but perfectly distinct when his arm did not rest on the table at all. The sounds were repeated at intervals of a few minutes until the article was finished.

Mrs. J. (Mr. Webster's sister) soon after returned from Boston, much interested in the subject, and being acquainted with a young girl, who was susceptible of mesmeric influence, and of the temperament most likely to become a medium, she invited her to spend the evening at the house of Mr. Webster, without informing her that she hoped to find her a medium.

A circle was formed; the "raps" were soon heard on the table where the girl was seated. Various questions were asked, to which intelligent answers were given. On asking if there was a medium present, a prompt affirmative was received, and, on calling the alphabet, "Harriet" was spelled out. The girl was much annoyed at the announcement, and it was with difficulty that she could be prevailed upon to remain in the house. After much persuasion, however, she was induced to remain, and became more quiet, and the company continued their investigations till near midnight. This girl's name was Harriet Thorp, who was the first medium known in Providence.

Mr. Webster was for a long time a partial medium, or was, according to his own account, often visited by the sounds when entirely alone, and they were often heard on his hat as he was walking through the street. After a time they ceased with him, and he became sceptical as to their source, though not as to the facts of the occurrences.

From this time circles were held almost daily in different families, and mediums were rapidly developed. The next medium known to the public was Mrs. Anna A. Wilbur, wife of Mr. A. S. Wilbur, a respectable auctioneer. So far as I have been able to ascertain, she was one of the best and most reliable mediums known in Providence.

The following communication was published in the Daily *Post*, and will give an idea of what was going forward in the spiritual

manifestations. It was written by D. B. Harris, at whose house many of the manifestations occurred.

"During the last three or four months I have been, as often as three evenings in each week, to witness what are popularly termed the 'spirit rappings.' I have heard these mysterious sounds, and seen articles of furniture moved about the room, in the presence of some six or eight mediums, in various sections of the city. I have witnessed many true and beautiful, and some erroneous and ludicrous, responses to questions propounded by visitors, and once or twice have been startled by some sudden and unexpected, though perfectly harmless, demonstrations.

"I have never thought it expedient, before, to make a statement through the press of the many unmistakable facts I have observed, or the conclusions I have drawn from them. But having recently been favored with some manifestations which transcended, by a few degrees, the extraordinary, I think your readers will be interested in a brief statement of them.

"The medium through whom the following strange demonstrations were received is an intelligent married lady living on the west side of the river.* She had been obliged, on account of ill-health, to keep her room for the last two or three weeks, and was not able to leave it on Sunday evening last, when I called to see her. She was in a room adjoining that in which three persons beside myself were seated, the door communicating with hers being open. Without leaving our seats we requested the spirits to rap; and they did rap promptly, and so loud that they might have been heard a hundred yards from the foot-board of the bed on which they were made. We then went into the room, closed the door so as to exclude the light, stood with our backs against the foot-board, and asked the spirits to strike or touch us. The raps came heavy and fast on the board against which we leaned, and the bed was pushed strongly against us three or four times.

* Mrs. Anna A. Wilbur.

The rapping then ceased, and we heard a sound resembling the flapping of a small bird's wings upon the white counterpane of the bed. Then the counterpane was drawn, by some invisible agency, entirely off the bed, rolled up into a heap, and laid four feet off upon the floor. We then replaced the counterpane, and requested it to be thrown on a chair at the head of the bed. This was instantly done. We repeated this experiment some six or eight times. A chair-cushion, placed upon the foot of the bed, was repeatedly thrown upon the chair which stood at the head, or upon the floor. We next placed a book upon the bed, and asked the spirits to open it. This was also done on the instant, and was repeated several times, the leaves rustling as if turned by the thumb. The book was then thrown from the bed, and lodged on the bureau, some five feet distant. It was then hurled, at our request, so violently against the door, that, if the latter had been made of plate glass, the book would have gone through it.

"Our next experiment was with a palm-leaf fan. We placed the fan on the bed, and desired the spirits to fan us. The fan was immediately raised up, brought close to our faces, and moved rapidly up and down, as if moved by a strong arm. This experiment we tried twice. A chair, which we laid upon the bed, was twice set down on the floor. We next put a broom in the same place, and asked the spirits to touch or strike us with it. They chose to do the latter. They smote us in right down earnest, striking us over the head and shoulders till we had enough of it. We then desired them to come into *immediate* contact with us — to touch or strike us with their hands, if they had any. We all sat a few minutes, holding each other by the hands, and then the blows came, much to our gratification and delight. They fell upon our backs and shoulders, and seemed something like those which might be made with an ordinary handkerchief, held by the four corners. This was the crowning experiment. It was more than we expected to get, although the spirits had promised it months before.

"Now, Mr. Editor, I solemnly assure your readers that the above is nothing more than a very brief statement of facts, in the order in which they occurred. Although there was but a dim twilight in the room, yet it was sufficiently light to see the outlines of material forms. We saw the bed more distinctly than other objects, it being white. We saw each other; we saw the fan, the broom, the book; and there is not the least possible chance for mistake or deception. And, more than all, the four persons present knew each other to be truthful and sincere, and indisposed to, as well as incapable of, performing any kind of trick in legerdemain. D. B. H."

The editor of the *Post* (Mr. Webster), in replying to some strictures on the manifestations made by a correspondent, says: "In the presence of the medium to which we referred in the article from which he (the correspondent) has quoted, we have seen the table moved, without the medium's hands resting upon it, scores of times, and it has been seen by some of the most critical and sceptical of our citizens — by eminent lawyers, skilful mechanics, shrewd business men, and, indeed, by every class in the community. If 'P.' wants to see it done, why don't he go where we have advised him to, and not cavil about its not being done somewhere else?"

Mr. Webster does not assert that he believes them spiritual, but, in this article and others, he defends the mediums, as a class, from the charge of imposition and deception.

During my residence in Providence, which commenced some time previous to the manifestations being heard there, and continued for two years, I had frequent opportunity to witness the different manifestations. I found them essentially the same as those in western New York. I obtained the same signal, on some occasions, that had been given as my father's, in Rochester, two years before. The first time this occurred was at a sitting where Miss Thorp was the medium. Mrs. Sarah Helen Whitman, C. Webster and others, were present. I asked for the sig-

nal of my father, which no one else in the room had ever heard or had any idea of, as I had been but a short time in Providence and had but a very slight acquaintance with any of the company. The signal was given correctly. Wishing to make a still stronger test, if possible, I asked for the other signal he sometimes gave. Immediately there came a sound as of sawing and planing boards, apparently under the centre of the table and against the top. I had lately been informed of some difficulty in regard to the title to a certain house and lot, which we were interested in, in a distant city, and it had caused me no little uneasiness; but no other person in Providence knew one word about it, as I had never mentioned it. On this occasion what purported to be the spirit of my father spelled out the following: "You have been much troubled about the lot, but it will all come out right." In some three or four days I received a letter saying that all *was* right in regard to the matter. This transaction was exactly on a parallel with those witnessed by hundreds in other places.

In Providence there was an unusual number of fanatics on the subject of spiritualism, and I observed that the fanaticism took mostly a religious turn, and was exhibited by persons who had been over-zealous in religious enthusiasm.

A friend in that city has kindly furnished me with the notes of a visit he, in company with a well-known literary lady, made to a family of these enthusiastic spiritualists. I insert it as a specimen of the folly of the early fanaticism of spiritualism.

"*Present some dozen persons*, with long faces, who spoke in whispers. Joseph, the medium, was blindfolded, a piece of chalk put into his hand, and seated before a table painted black. Soon his hand began to move with great violence, and in a few minutes he wrote with great rapidity on the table. Generally his lines ran into each other, so that, at the conclusion of the sentence or communication, there was nothing distinguishable but a mass of chalk. He would then read or repeat what the spirit had written. Each sentence was taken down by a scribe for future meditation.

Most of the communications purported to come from the Saviour. The first sentence was as follows, and from the Saviour:

'I see you all — do not start —
God from his children never will depart.'

"Then followed a communication in prose, as follows: 'Come to me all, for I am God, the Father Almighty.'

"*Spirit.* 'Yes, the time will come
When we will be united in one.'

"*L.* (*one of the circle.*) 'That will be a glorious time, Mr.P.'

"*Spirit.* 'Yes, my son, that will be,
And stranger things you will see.'

"*Spirit.* 'Raise your thoughts to God on high,
For he has the power' —

(The rhyme would n't come that time.)

"*Spirit.* 'And if you will come to me,
Stranger things you shall see.
Then, like an angel, soar on high,
To seek your God in heaven.'

"Mrs. M. remarked, 'How beautiful!'

"*Spirit.* 'You must trust in me, for I am the one to guide you.'

"*Mr. L.* 'That 's it.'

"*Spirit.* 'Blessed are those that seek me in truth,
For I have a power to heal all your wounds.'

"*Mr. H.* 'I never met where there was such a heavenly influence on me as there is here this evening.'

"The spirit then drew something like a box, with a cross on the top of it, and wrote beneath, 'The altar of your God.' Then a tree, and wrote beneath, 'The tree of life.' These, the medium informed us, were done by Dr. Franklin.

"*Spirit of the Saviour.*

'Then call on me,
And you shall see,
That the power of God comes down free.'

"*Mr. L.* 'Without money and without price.'

"*Spirit.* 'Your prayers are registered in the Book of Heaven:
You can come in at the hour of eleven.'

"*Spirit.* 'These things you shall see, for I have said in the Bible that strange things should come to pass. But these things are not strange for those who have a mind for God.'

"*Spirit.* 'I am Christ, who was crucified, who died and bled for you.

Then in turn give me all your heart,
For Christ from goodness never will depart.'

"*Spirit.* 'Then to all that heed,
Your sorrows shall not make your hearts bleed.'

"*Spirit of Mr. L.'s father.*

'My sons, the altar shall be finished, and reveal
The wounded hearts which no mortal on earth can heal.'

"*Same Spirit.* 'You wish me to explain —
So I will,
So be still,
And I will
In time.'

"*Spirit of the Saviour.* 'Have you ever seen these things as you all do now?'

"The medium drew a cross with a scratch around it, and wrote beneath, 'The glory of God.'

"*Spirit of the Saviour.*

'You can be pure — that will attract
The invisible power that will never go back.
It continues to rap all over the world,
And no being has power to control.'

"*Spirit.* 'To ye poets, who love to hear,
Give me your hearts, and do not fear.
Compose of heaven, not of earth,
For there are things will give ye mirth.'

"*Mrs. M.* 'Is n't it beautiful?'

"*Spirit.* 'Keep up your hearts, and do not sink,
For you are on a heavenly brink.'

"*Mr. H.* 'We must be on the verge of time.'

"*Spirit.* 'The stars of heaven do shine like the pure hearts of our poets.'

"*Mr. H.* 'Have you not had an impression of a spiritual diamond on Joseph's breast? There is a bright diamond shining there.'

"*Spirit.* 'Be ye all prepared in mind,
For God may appear in a robe of light.'

"*Mrs. M.* 'I wish we might see something to-night.'

"*Mr. L.* 'We are not all prepared.'

"*Spirit.* 'Be ye of open hearts to receive, and I will reveal to you unseen wonders.'

"*Mr. L.* 'You may be assured, my friends, that this is the second coming of Christ.'"

Religious cant and fanaticism are exhibited in the whole proceedings so exactly portrayed above. It may be a solution of the poetical turn given to the communications, that two of the spectators were known as poets of some eminence. This circle seldom had any communications from any less source than the "Saviour," or the apostles; but it was a singular fact that all the communications from this source were of the above puerile character, and unworthy of the talents of a child of half-a-dozen years. What the true solution of such occurrences is, I will not undertake to say, more than to suggest that a circle of fanatical spirits in the flesh would, by the laws of affinity, attract the same class out of the flesh; hence such folly, of which this is by no means a rare sample. I have never known an instance where a medium or circle claimed to have all the great dignitaries of church and state, and them only, for their instructors, that the communications did not consist of the most senseless twaddle, full of ranting and sheer nonsense. Whereas the mediums having a strong feeling of self-respect and common-sense, making no pretensions to being so highly favored, get some of the most beautiful and important demonstrations which have been given to the world.

Among the friends of the spiritual cause in Providence no one has exhibited more firmness, and none more readiness to defend

in public and in private the spiritual theory of these manifestations, than Mrs. Sarah Helen Whitman, the poetess. We cannot forbear, in this connection, saying a word as to her character, in this respect. It too often happens that a man or woman, who is a genius, a poet, is so tinctured with imagination, and so wholly governed by fancy, that they are not good judges of plain common-sense matters of fact. In Mrs. Whitman's case it is far different. She is not only a poet, but a sound philosopher and reasoner. Her conversation and her prose writing have a strength and solidity about them, which characterize very few persons, male or female, whether they soar, like her, into the beautiful regions of fancy, or continually plod on in their plain prosy reasoning. She always writes with vigor when reasoning on any subject, and does not forget to fortify herself with a strong array of facts. The following is an extract of one of her letters to Mr. Brittan, editor of the *Spiritual Telegraph*. It has so much of the historical in it that nothing could be more appropriate to this place :

"PROVIDENCE, July 5, 1852.

"S. B. BRITTAN — DEAR SIR : I learn with pleasure through your paper, and from other reliable sources, that manifestations of spiritual force and spiritual influence are attracting increasing attention from intelligent and enlightened observers in various parts of the country. In an able and highly complimentary review of Baron Reichenbach's work on Dynamics, published in the American Review for April, it is intimated that the great chemist is about to investigate the phenomena of electrical sounds heard in the presence of spiritual mediums, believing them to be in some way connected with the manifestations of odic light and odic force, in which he has made such important discoveries. In our part of the country public opinion is, I think, greatly changed in relation to the spiritual phenomena within the last year. I meet with comparatively few persons now who are disposed to treat the subject with levity. Much valuable testimony is rendered by persons who do not know what to make of the facts, and who are unwilling to refer them to a spiritual influence.

"One evening, not long since, I was at a circle formed for investigation, when one of our most eminent physicians, who has long been a candid and dispassionate observer of the new phenomena, entered the room accompanied by a distinguished surgeon, who had often remonstrated with his friend for giving heed to this ridiculous imposture, for such he had assumed it to be. Knowing the scepticism of this gentleman, I was surprised to see him seat himself at the table with an air of grave and earnest attention. Presently I heard him inquire for a signal from some anonymous friend, which, after a little delay, was, as he said, correctly given. On expressing my surprise to find him at an inquiry meeting of this character, he remarked that he had as yet arrived at no opinion on the subject, but that his attention had been arrested by some recent facts in his experience, which had completely baffled his philosophy. He had a short time before consented to accompany his friend, Dr. C——,* to one of these spiritual *reünions*, in the hope of detecting the imposture, or in some other way solving the mystery without a recourse to the theory of supernatural agency. On this occasion he had received such evidence of the intervention of unknown power and intelligence, as to excite a lively interest in the subject, and induce him to pursue the investigation. J—— F—— S——, Esq.,† the ex-senator, has for more than a year been a firm believer and fearless assertor of his belief in these wonderful truths. His experience in the matter equals anything I have yet seen recorded. He is an able politician, and a man of such well-known shrewdness and sagacity in worldly affairs, that his authority, to a certain class of minds, carries with it immense weight. He believes that the moral influence of these new experiences is in the highest degree ennobling and refining. He has made the subject a study, and the assurance acquired by a patient and unwearied examination of facts renders him indifferent to any temporary imputation of credulity or infatuation to which he may be subjected. There are few men

* Dr. George Capron. † Hon. Jas. F. Simmons, Ex. U. S. Senator.

of his class who would have the courage to speak as openly and unreservedly as he has done. Clergymen are, for the most part, rather shy of the subject, as are in general all the more prudential and conventional sort of people.

"'The conventional habits of society,' says Dr. Gregory, 'make us all more or less hypocrites. Men cannot yet worship truth as the best knowledge.' One or two distinguished clergymen of my acquaintance do not hesitate to avow their interest in the subject. An evangelical divine — a dignitary of the Episcopal church — came recently to Providence, expressly to attend a circle formed for investigation. He was much perplexed by the occurrences of the evening. Not many days ago I was conversing with a lady of superior intelligence and refinement, the wife of a Unitarian clergyman, then on a visit to our city. In referring to the recent death of a beloved relative, she spoke with such cheerful tranquillity, that I was induced to ask her if she was a believer in the fact of spiritual intercourse as indicated in the wonderful manifestations of the day. She did not immediately answer me, and I began to fear, from her silence, that my question was displeasing to her; when she replied, that although the subject was one on which she had seldom spoken, she had, in her own family circle, received evidences of the truth of these things, so dear and sacred to them, that they had left no room for doubt in the hearts of those to whom they were accorded. She informed me that she had experienced such serenity of soul, so divine a consolation, in the assurance thus obtained of the tender love and sympathy of her departed friends, and of a progressive existence beyond the grave, that, in the midst of many trials, her heart had been filled with devout hope and grateful adoration.

"I read with much interest the letters on Mesmeric Phenomena, published in some late numbers of the *Telegraph*. 'We are,' says Dr. Ashburnham, in his preface to Reichenbach, 'but at the commencement of the wonders of clairvoyance, and are in no position to estimate the great fund of new truths that, by means of its cultivated agency, are in store for us. The researches into odic

light, by the baron, do not yet appear to belong immediately to clairvoyance, and yet the links which connect these inquiries are not far off. Reichenbach's researches are but the commencement of a vast number of researches yet to be made, that will sooner or later establish the relations of light to the phenomena of the human mind,'—I should rather have said to the soul or life-principle. If I am not mistaken, Prof. Bush conceived the idea of this relation before the facts of mesmerism had received much attention in this country. He introduced it, I think, in a course of lectures on the Mosaic records, and sought to illustrate it by reference to certain luminous appearances seen by the seers and clairvoyants of the olden time. I remember that, while he was delivering these lectures in our city, I received from Dr. Wm. Channing, of New York, a copy of the first English edition of Townshend's 'Facts in Mesmerism.' There were at the time but three copies of the work in the country.

"Thinking Townshend's work might be interesting to Professor Bush, as reflecting light on the theory which he had advanced in his lectures, I lent him the volume, in which he became deeply interested. I believe this was his first introduction to the subject of mesmerism, which he has since so ably treated in its connection with Swedenborgianism. Some interesting facts on the subject of these luminous appearances, as connected with the human brain, are to be found in a series of articles published in the *Dublin University Magazine*, under the general head of 'Miscellanæ Mystica.' They commenced, I think, in the volume for eighteen hundred forty-five, and were continued at intervals for several years. They contain some of the most remarkable physiological and psychical facts to be met with in any English or American work of the day. They are interesting as preceding by several years and remotely suggesting a philosophy of death and of the soul's transfiguration, similar to that so beautifully developed in one of Mr. Davis' recent works. The idea of an existing spiritual body enshrined within, and veiled by the material, has long attracted my attention. Dr. John Garth Wilkinson, the author

of the life of Swendenborg, and the translator of his scientific works, in his admirable treatise on 'The Human Body in its Connection with Man,' rejecting the sceptical theories of the more eminent physiologists of France, has boldly assumed, and most ingeniously illustrated, the idea of a spiritual body, infolded within and controlling the material. 'Could we,' he says, 'behold an apparition of the nervous spirit, waving and sweeping through the curves of the body, we should see that there are motions and mechanisms which transcend the mere external likeness and habitation of life, and should know, by solemn experience, that our organization is an imperishable truth that derides the grave of the body.'

"'We also affirm,' says Wilkinson, 'a nerve-spirit of the human race which is *not* man, but God *in* man; a veritable revelation or word, a genuine influx. Man is in the leading-strings of God and Nature, and what is greater than himself, to the end of his career. It is said, in Psalms, that we are God's temples, and therefore the native land of hope, and the arena of miracles. Our pontiffs say that the age of miracles is past, but no New Testament ever told them so. Christianity, as *we* read it, was the institution of miracles as in the order of nature.' The author also hints at a scientific theory of the influx of ideas from other men, 'visible and invisible,' as an account of the outward supplies of life. 'It seems,' he says, 'indeed remarkable, that the influence of the vegetable world upon climate, and of electricity upon the atmosphere, should be universally admitted, and no influence from the human world of a similar, but higher kind, be suspected. But the time is not yet for these and similar questions; they are, however, as doves which float already in the poetic air, and the dry land of science is about to appear, on which they can alight.'

"I have just heard of some interesting facts in connection with the strange and beautiful truths which have so enlarged the perspective of the future, and made the present rich with significance and hope; perhaps I may communicate them to you in a future letter.

"Your friend,

"Sarah H. Whitman."

The following is an extract from a letter, by the same writer, to Mr. Greeley, editor of the New York *Tribune:*

"An eminent clergyman of the Episcopal church said, not many days ago, to one of his communicants, who had unwittingly become a medium, 'When I talked with you, a year since, in relation to this matter, I was disposed to think that the whole thing might be resolved into a combination of mesmeric influence, imposition, collusion and credulity; now I am constrained to adopt a very disagreeable alternative, and to believe that it is a device of the arch-enemy.'

"As a sign of the times, I received yesterday from our friend Bronson Alcott, the eloquent Platonist of Concord, the prospectus of a course of lectures, the Dæmon, — using the word, I trust, in the good old Socratic sense, as a term for spiritual or immortal natures. Is it not Emerson that says,

> 'Close, close above our heads
> The potent plain of Dæmons spreads;
> Stands to each human soul his own,
> For watch, and ward, and furtherance.
>
> * * * * *
>
> 'Sometimes the airy synod bends,
> And the mighty choir descends,
> And the brains of men thenceforth
> Teem with unaccustomed thoughts.

"These lines, or something like them, I think, are in a poem on 'The Dæmonic and Celestial Loves,' in which the word Dæmon is applied to spiritual intelligences intermediate between merely human and purely celestial natures.

"I learn by a paragraph in a late number of the *Tribune*, and also through various private sources, that experiments in what is regarded as the operation of electric forces on matter, are becoming quite frequent among the curious. The theory of 'detached, vitalized electricity,' as propounded by Drs. Taylor, Richmond, and others, has many adherents. 'Before we erect an altar to

this unknown God,' says one of the ablest writers on the new manifestations, 'it would be well carefully to test the rationality of our theory.' A very erudite and valuable work on 'The Spiritual Medium,' with the Greek title 'To Daimonion,' has been lately published, attributing all the mysterious phenomena of the present day to the abnormal excitement of the nervous principle, an agent intermediate between mind and matter, which may, indeed, be powerfully wrought upon by minds in the body, but which, since the days of the apostles, has been hermetically sealed to the influence of all disembodied and spiritual intelligences. He accepts these wonders, because they rest on unimpeachable authority, but ascribes all to 'natural causes,' unmindful that a close and thoughtful study of natural science inevitably introduces the student into the domain of spiritual and occult forces. 'That which God has joined, can no man put asunder.' The author quotes largely from the ancients, and cites many learned authorities, which, however, often prove too much for his theory. He has brought together many valuable facts, but throws no new light on them by his speculations. He admits that the thoughts of absent persons seem often transmitted through the medium, but doubts if they be really so transmitted. He confesses to fears and trepidations, and his fears evidently falsify the report of his reason. He assumes that it is 'sinful and dangerous to transcend the *established sources of knowledge* (?) granted us by our Creator — to get out of the path in which he has made us to walk.' He says, 'Let us leave these investigations to men trained to the work. Let a Pliny, an Agassiz, press forward to view this agitated Vesuvius, ere we trust our own feet on the quivering crust! It may be that even they will peril themselves in the attempt. Certainly *we* shall peril ourselves.'

"The author's whole argument is a special plea for the authority of the Bible, not only as the great central light, but as the *only* light that God ever did, or ever *will* suffer to shine on his children. Forgetting 'that Light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world' — that influence of the Spirit which

shall yet be 'poured out on all nations,' — he assumes that all 'knowledge of the Spiritual World, of God, and of the *preparation we need for a future existence*, must be gained, if gained at all, from sources *outside of ourselves*, from *supernatural revelation*,' — by which he means exclusively the revelations recorded in the Bible. 'All our personal knowledge,' he affirms, 'are the observation of material things by the senses, and the intuitions or deductions of the reason as to spiritual things.' In support of this materialistic philosophy, which would limit the powers of the soul to the observation and the understanding, he cites Plato, as reported in 'Lectures on Theology, by G. C. Knapp, D. D., translated from the German by Rev. Leonard Woods, Jr.' But if *we*, too, may be permitted to cite Plato, we would quote his beautiful creed, '*The world is good in a state of becoming.*' Could we bear in mind this sublime truth, we should not so readily limit the powers of Nature and of the human soul to any fixed or arbitrary standard.

"I would not undervalue the position of the men who regard these things with distrust and awe. Caution and calm self-possession are imperatively called for. Let the timid stand back and wait till the path is made smooth for their feet. For me, I would make many a costly sacrifice — I would peril all but faith in God and 'the fellowship of the Holy Ghost,' to gain a knowledge of the life that lies beyond the dark valley; and this, not so much for the satisfaction of my own soul's thirst, as for the desolate and doubting hearts that are 'without God and without hope in the world' — they to whom the soul's future exists only as

> 'A wild weird clime,
> Out of space — out of time.'

But to me these experiences, so far from exercising a disturbing influence, have been fraught with benignity and beauty; they have taught me the great truth that a life beyond the grave is not *merely* a life of ecstatic reverie and devout abstraction; that it is also a life of development, of progress, of tender human

charities, of enlarged sympathies, of increasing susceptibilities to beauty and to love; that it strengthens all inherent affinities, all pure and lofty relations of soul with soul. I have received from them the confirmation of every devout hope, of every heavenward aspiration.

"Minds predisposed to excitement, unaccustomed to reflect on the mysteries of life, and unsettled in their religious faith, will doubtless be thrown into confusion by these new truths. There are victims to every new discovery — every new conquest of the human mind. Hundreds of lives are yearly sacrificed through the application of steam-power to marine and inland transportation. Through the introduction of the various improvements in machinery and the mechanic arts, thousands are thrown out of employment, and die of poverty and starvation.

"California was not settled without loss and danger. Many victims lie at the foot of her golden mountains, and line the banks of her opulent rivers. The great reformers in science and religion thought life and liberty of little moment when weighed in a balance with the truths they were born to utter. And shall we, to whom the veil is at last lifted — we, to whom the children of another sphere descend with messages of peace and love — shall *we* falter because some temporary evil attends the unfolding of this new dispensation? Shall the pale horse of Death be overthrown — shall 'the drear white steed' be quelled without a conflict?

"The manifestations of our day are not fortuitous and abnormal. They indicate a law, to which by patient research we shall yet attain. God has not introduced phantasms into his universe to mislead and beguile us. All that exists by his permission is controlled by his providence. We must endeavor to distinguish between the use and the abuse of these mysterious agencies. An enlargement of the domain of thought or action always implies new responsibilities, and demands higher virtues from him who would use them wisely and beneficently.

"New views of Nature are opening to us — wonderful glimpses

of her modes and methods of process and development. On one hand the marvel and the mystery of matter is inciting to more accurate and curious researches in the department of physical science. On the other, the occult psychical energies that lie folded up within us are pointing to a rich and unexplored domain of our mysterious inner life; and the knowledge of this winged, expansive nature, that has so long lain dimly dreaming within its chrysalis, is revealed to us pecisely at the epoch when the rapid process of physical science threatened to banish the last faint vestiges of our faith in spiritual causation and spiritual influence.

"The mysterious phenomena of the present day came to us unsought and unlooked for. Immersed in materialism, and in the hurry and tumult of actual life, we are constrained to pause and regard with reverence and attention the evidence of a spiritual existence and an immortal destiny which are accorded to us. No partial result of observation or experience can decide for us the aim and tendency of this marvellous dispensation. We await the unfolding of God's benignant purpose in serenity and hope.

"You may use, at your own discretion, what I have written. Your friend, SARAH HELEN WHITMAN."

The following letter from her, or part of a letter, gives some important facts, which have been widely commented upon, from the prominence of the distinguished gentleman who was making the investigations. All who know Mr. Simmons, either as a public or private citizen — as a Senator in Congress, or a quiet business man of Providence — know him as a shrewd and sagacious man, who has keen penetration and sound judgment to aid him in the investigation of any subject, however novel or seemingly marvellous.

"DEAR SIR: I have had no conversation with Mr. Simmons on the subject of your note until to-day. I took an early opportunity of acquainting him with its contents, and this morning he called on me to say that he was perfectly willing to impart to you the particulars of his experience in relation to the mysterious

writing *performed under his very eyes in broad daylight, by an invisible agent.* In the fall of 1850, several messages were telegraphed to Mrs. Simmons through the electric sounds, purporting to come from her step-son, James D. Simmons, who died some weeks before in California!

"The messages were calculated to stimulate curiosity, and lead to an attentive observation of the phenomena. Mrs. S., having heard that messages in the hand-writing of deceased persons were sometimes written through the same medium, asked if her son would give her this evidence. She was informed (through the sounds) that the attempt should be made, and was directed to place a slip of paper in a certain drawer at the house of the medium, and to lay beside it her own pencil, which had been given her by the deceased. Weeks passed on, and, although frequent inquiries were made, no writing was found on the paper.

"Mrs. Simmons, happening to call at the house one day, accompanied by her husband, made the usual inquiry, and received the usual answer. The drawer had been opened not two hours before, and nothing was seen in it but the pencil lying on the blank paper. At the suggestion of Mrs. S., however, another investigation was made, and on the paper were now found a few pencilled lines, resembling the hand-writing of the deceased, but not so closely as to satisfy the mother's doubts. Mrs. Simmons handed the paper to her husband. He thought there was a slight resemblance, but should probably not have remarked it had the writing been casually presented to him. Had the *signature* been given him he should at once have decided on the resemblance. He proposed, if the spirit of his son were indeed present, as alphabetical communications, received through the sounds, affirmed him to be, that he should *then* and *there* affix his signature to the suspicious document.

"In order to facilitate the operation, Mr. S. placed the closed points of a pair of scissors in the hands of the medium, and dropped his pencil through one of the rings or bows, the paper being placed beneath. Her hand presently began to tremble, and

it was with difficulty she could retain her hold of the scissors. Mr. Simmons then took them into his own hand, and again dropped his pencil through the ring. It could not readily be sustained in this position. After a few moments, however, it stood as if firmly poised and perfectly still. *It then began slowly to move. Mr. Simmons saw the letters traced beneath his eyes — the words J. D. Simmons were distinctly and deliberately written, and the hand-writing was a fac simile of his son's signature.* But what Mr. Simmons regards as the most astonishing part of this seeming miracle is yet to be told.

"Bending down to scrutinize the writing more closely, he observed, just as the last word was finished, that the top of the pencil leaned to the right; he thought it was about to slip through the ring, but, to his infinite astonishment, *he saw the point slide slowly back along the word 'Simmons' till it rested over the letter i, where it deliberately imprinted a dot.* This was a punctilio utterly unthought of by him; he had not noticed the omission, and was therefore entirely unprepared for the amendment. He suggested the experiment, and hitherto it had kept pace only with his will or desire; but how will those who deny the agency of disembodied spirits in these marvels, ascribing all to the unassisted powers of the human will, or to the blind action of electricity — how will they dispose of this last significant and curious fact? The only peculiarity observable in the writing was that the lines seemed sometimes slightly broken, as if the pencil had been lifted and then set down again.

"Another circumstance I am permitted to relate, which is not readily to be accounted for on any other theory than that of spiritual agency. Mr. Simmons, who had received no particulars of his son's death until several months after his decease, proposing to send for his remains, questioned the spirit as to the manner in which the body had been disposed of, and received a very minute and circumstantial account of the means which had been resorted to for its preservation, it being at the time unburied.

"Improbable as some of these statements seemed, they were,

after an interval of four months, confirmed as literally true by a gentleman, then recently returned from California, who was with young Simmons at the period of his death. Intending soon to return to San Francisco, he called on Mr. Simmons to learn his wishes in relation to the final disposition of his son's remains.

"I took down the particulars in writing, by the permission of Mr. S., during his relation of the facts. I have many other narratives of a like character from persons of intelligence and veracity; but they could add nothing to the weight of that which I have just reported to you. * * * * *

"S. H. W."

A writer, before alluded to,* in giving an account to the *Daily Post* (Providence), gives the following account of occurrences, most of which took place at his house. It is proper to state that I was present at the circle when many of these things took place. The writer says:

"Four, and sometimes five, persons, besides the medium,† have been seated around a small table, in a darkened room, when the spirits have rapped out to us, 'Join hands and harmonize your minds.' We, of course, obeyed directions. Upon the floor, under the table, we had previously placed a guitar; and on the table we had placed another guitar and a small house-bell. After sitting quietly a few moments, we inquired if the spirits would make music for us on the guitars. The answer came promptly in the affirmative, and the strings of the instrument which lay *under* the table were struck as if by human fingers. The instrument was then drawn slowly out of its place and deposited near the centre of the room. The guitar which lay on the table was then lifted up and carried off in the direction of the first. Both guitars then commenced playing in harmony, but only for a moment. They stopped suddenly, and one of the instruments flew up over our heads, playing some tune to us unknown. We asked the spirits to play some air familiar to our ears. They immediately struck

* D. B. Harris, of Providence. † Mrs. Wilbur.

up Yankee Doodle, occasionally knocking the guitar against the ceiling, and then bringing it down close to our heads, and around our ears. The spirits then played the accompaniments to several tunes sung by the company — the instruments moving, and sometimes in double quick time, from one end of the room to the other.

"Sometimes the guitar would fly from one side of the room to the opposite, and from the floor to the ceiling, and then back again; now tapping on the window, and then on the door; now glancing athwart our shoulders, and then patting us on our heads in the most familiar and loving manner. All this while our hands were firmly clasped, and our circle was kept unbroken. True we could see nothing; but all I have stated we both heard and felt. After this had been going on an hour or more, we asked the spirits to ring the bell. The guitar they laid with considerable force upon the table; the bell was seized, almost with rudeness, and furiously rung all round the room, sometimes passing over our heads and sometimes near the floor; flying rapidly from one angle of the room to the opposite — one moment behind the chairs, and the next close to our noses.

"When the spirits had rung the bell sufficiently they placed it on the table, took the guitar again, and recommenced the music, playing several lively and popular airs. To vary the experiments, we asked the spirits to open the backgammon-board, which lay in one corner of the room, and place the men ready for playing. The board opened instantly; we heard it lifted from the floor and shaken violently, and the men, dice, and boxes, were tossed into the air and fell in a shower around the apartment. Another time, when we asked to hear the tread of feet, we heard, instead, the rustling of silk, as if a lady dressed in that material was gliding about the room. Books, dresses, shawls, fans, and other articles, were brought, or thrown, from distant parts of the room, into the laps of some persons in the company. On one occasion the guitar was taken from the table, and stood, with a remarkable degree of care, upon the floor; the large end resting against my own hand and arm, and the hand of the medium, which I held in mine.

After considerable fixing of the instrument in this inverted position the spirit began to entertain us by making sounds upon it. At first the wood part of the instrument was gently knocked by what seemed to us to be a common nail-hammer, growing louder and louder, until it blended into a sound like that of the end of a man's fingers drumming upon the wood. Then the sound changed to that of the knuckles, then of the fist, and back again to the hammer. These were succeeded by imitations, more or less correct, of the sawing of boards, driving of nails, planing, boring, and filing. Then these were followed by imitating the singing of birds, and by sounds that I should suppose would resemble the splitting of guitar strings into innumerable fibres. After this curious demonstration, the instrument was carried by the spirits towards a window, through the upper part of which a dim moonlight shone; *and then we could see the guitar perform sundry fantastic tricks for our amusement.* It would move, sometimes horizontally and then vertically; it would dance, and then remain at rest, dart back into the darkness, and then push forward into the dim moonlight, until we were perfectly satisfied with its lively performances; when it was gently laid upon the table, as if the operator wished for further orders. But none being given, the spirits lifted the guitar off the table, turned the latter half way round, and opened and shut the leaves of a book some dozen times; and this could all be seen, though indistinctly. * * *

"I have hardly given you a *specimen* of the occurrences that are taking place nightly in this city. At some future time, if you will permit me, I will tell you something more. Most of the persons who have sat in the circle with me have often felt spirits touch them. I have been particularly favored in this way. Many a time a human hand (to all appearance) has pressed my head, my shoulder, my knees, and my feet; and I *know*, if I know anything, that it was done by no person (in the flesh) in the room, or in this world. D. B. H."

I should add to this account the fact that, at one time, when Mrs. Wilbur, the medium in the cases cited above, had been ill

for some time, and was confined to her bed, she was, in presence of witnesses, raised up by some invisible power, clear from her bed! A number of reliable witnesses, who were present at the time, have borne testimony to this fact.

Another fact in regard to Providence is an unusual number of media in the families of wealthy and influential persons, who are extremely mortified to find themselves the "victims" of such annoyances. They are not so much disturbed at the manifestations themselves, as by the fear that the facts may become public. It has been thus with some families from the early days of the demonstrations in that city. At some future time, if spiritualism should become popular, we may expect to see these persons crowding to the front ranks, and claiming to have been pioneers in the cause; but now the popular cry of humbug, or infidelity, proves an overmatch for their confidence in truth and an honest avowal of it. Some of the finest, perhaps *the* finest and most important communications ever given through "mediums," are yet firmly locked in the desks of the class of persons here alluded to, and in different parts of the country.

CHAPTER XI.

MANIFESTATIONS IN PHILADELPHIA — FIRST ATTEMPTS TO OBTAIN RESPONSES — REMARKABLE PERSEVERANCE AND PATIENCE — DETAILS OF THE PROCEEDINGS IN THE FIRST CIRCLES — ORGANIZATION AND PROGRESS OF THE CAUSE — PUBLIC MEETINGS AND LECTURES.

THE most minute account of the early manifestations in this city I find in a pamphlet published in 1851, and valuable for its historical rather than its philosophical information.* In his introduction the author says:

"There are in this city between fifty and sixty circles, composed of Presbyterians, Quakers, Unitarians, Baptists, Methodists, Come-out-ers, Infidels, and Atheists, who are candidly and dispassionately investigating the subject, to endeavor to ascertain, from facts and phenomena developed, the laws which govern these manifestations. The progress thus far has satisfied the honest inquirer in these circles that the rappings are produced by an agency in accordance with Nature's laws, hitherto not understood, and they feel confident they have not been deceived by trickery on the part of the mediums, or any one of their number; and the phenomena attending the communications by the alphabet have been such as to convince them that an agency beyond the control of the medium operates on the finger. The productions, they believe, speak for themselves, and establish their own character; they further believe this science is but in its infancy, and is calculated, if investigated in the right spirit, to perform a great work in society, towards its progress in goodness and happiness."

* A History of the recent Developments in Spiritual Manifestations, in the city of Philadelphia, by a member of the first circle, instituted in the month of October, 1850.

The following is the chapter which embraces the historical part of the commencement of circles and their success:

"It was in an untrammeled state of mind that some ten or twelve individuals of both sexes, in the city of Philadelphia, agreed to enter upon an investigation of those phenomena, of which they had heard from different sources, termed 'Rochester Knockings,' 'Spiritual Manifestations,' 'Mysterious Noises,' &c. Only two of the number had ever witnessed any demonstrations; and, from what they had seen, were convinced that there was enough in the matter to justify an effort at investigation. The rest of the number were all, more or less, sceptical; and none able fully to appreciate the greatness of the subject upon which they were about to enter, as manifested in the subsequent developments.

"Most of these individuals were intimate friends, each confiding in the other's integrity,—friends that had been before engaged together in other great moral and philosophical enterprises. Their labors in this field of research were commenced under circumstances where deception, collusion or intrigue, were entirely out of the question. None desired to be deceived, none wished to deceive, but all were anxious to arrive at the truth.

"Philadelphia was new ground; neither the much-abused and injured Fox family, nor any other mediums, had ever visited the city in the capacity of mediums, nor had there ever been a single manifestation in the city that had come to the knowledge of one of the individuals concerned. The two gentlemen who had witnessed the phenomena visited the city of New York for that purpose.

"Their means of acquiring instruction, in reference to the formation and management of a circle, were very limited, and many disadvantages arising from this cause were to be overcome by patience and perseverance. No foreign aid was obtained, the counsel of no experienced circle was made available; but the work was undertaken with sincerity of purpose, and an entire reliance

on the honest endeavors of each individual to induce the proper conditions.

"Under these circumstances the work was commenced by holding the first meeting on the ninth of October, 1850.

"No regular organization was entered into for some time, but regular meetings were held every Sunday evening, and also during the week, at the houses of those interested.

"One of the ladies engaged in the work had been for years a good clairvoyant, and when in the third state, condition or degree of mesmerism, — into which state she could often pass voluntarily, — she would encourage the circle frequently in their labors, and often give important directions in reference to the conduct of the members. When in this third state she appeared to be so far removed from external influences and conditions, and so interior in her perception, as to be wholly unconscious of external circumstances, and highly endowed with interior impressions. While in this state she would inform the circle of the presence of the guardian spirits of those present, and their willingness to communicate, as soon as favorable conditions could be induced, urging them to secure a greater degree of harmony, and encouraging them to persevere, saying, 'You will get the responses soon.'

"Thus, for four months, the meetings were held weekly, and often semi and tri weekly, without a single response. At each meeting the clairvoyant, when in the state, would be questioned, 'Shall we have the responses to-night?' The answer was invariably 'No,' until the evening of February 10th, 1851, when, to the usual question, the answer was 'Not many,' causing a gleam of hope to dart through the minds of all present. Almost immediately after this answer was given the clairvoyant became much agitated; and a lady sitting opposite to her started back in alarm, exclaiming, 'I felt something right under my hands!' One of the gentlemen, who had heard the sounds in New York, recognized them here; they were also heard by all present. The gentleman said, joyfully: 'We have them with us; calm your

excitement, and we can get responses.' All endeavored to obey the injunction, but with little success; for, at each response to a question, the various feelings of the members would again rush forth. Each one present received answers to inquiries for guardian spirits, and satisfactory responses were received to a number of test questions.

"The medium, — for such had the lady now become, — when in the interior condition, had, previously to this, frequently seen the spirits a great way off, and often had had communion with them. They would occasionally impress her with messages to the circle to be of good cheer — that we should have communications as soon as we were prepared for them. She also told them that there was no medium in the circle, but that she would be the first to become one.

"At the time these first responses were heard the medium was in the interior condition; after the manifestations had continued a short time she informed the circle that she would wake up, and the responses would continue. This proved to be correct, but the sounds were much lower. The meeting adjourned at a late hour, the members feeling that they had been richly repaid for the four months' preparation. What earthly treasures could have afforded a richer reward? For the first time their ears had been saluted with sounds from the other world; the dark and impenetrable gulf, hitherto existing between them and the eternal future, had been annihilated as if by magic; that awful veil, through which their mental vision had never before penetrated, was at once withdrawn, and they were enabled to inhale through their physical senses sweet and soothing intelligence from the celestial spheres. Long absent friends stood in their midst, old associations were revived, and interesting conversations were held. Parents met children; children met parents; brothers and sisters, husbands and wives, after what they had supposed an eternal separation, greeted each other in sweet and holy communion, and seemed to be locked in long and fond embraces; tears of joy at these happy meetings gushed freely from many eyes, and all hearts swelled

with emotions of gratitude to the Supreme Ruler of the Universe, for having instituted laws by which these much desired, most desirable developments might be unfolded to his intelligent creation.

"The sneering sceptic may laugh, the pious sceptic may sigh, at what they may term blind credulity; but that will not do away with the facts as they existed, and continue to exist, nor obliterate the recollections of those delightful emotions that were excited on that memorable occasion. At this meeting an arrangement was made with the spirits, that one rap should signify no, three yes, and two a medium between yes and no — as perhaps, partially, &c., &c.

"After this, the meetings were held nightly for a short time, during which the sounds increased in loudness and frequency; but no communications by the alphabet had been received, neither had there been any physical demonstrations. The first effort at spelling was made on the evening of the 19th of February, 1851, which consisted of these words: 'You are to have the d——' The sentence was left thus unfinished, with a promise to complete it at the next meeting, should the conditions be more favorable.

"On the 22d, the circle again met; the responses were very good. The question was asked, Can you finish the sentence commenced at last meeting? To which a negative answer was obtained. Then the question was asked, Can you impress the medium with what you desired to communicate? *Answer* — Yes. Will you please do it? *Answer* — Yes. The medium, being in the interior condition, presently became somewhat agitated, and in a few minutes observed, 'He was trying to tell you that you are to have the demonstrations more powerfully soon.'

"On the evening of the 23d, after having had very good and satisfactory responses, the table around which the circle was seated was observed to be in a vibratory motion; this was succeeded by its being raised about one and a half inches from the floor, and moved backwards and forwards, and then

settling to its place. This phenomenon was not observed to the satisfaction of all present; a request was made to have it repeated, which was done, in a minute or two, to the astonishment of all.

"From this time almost every meeting, for some weeks, was visited by physical demonstrations more or less violent. Sometimes, to the uninitiated and unconfiding, they would have been terrific. Often a shudder of terror would pervade the most of the circle, until they could feel full confidence in the often-repeated assurances of the spirits that no personal injury should be sustained by any of the circle.

"A description of the demonstrations is not deemed advisable, as the public credulity has already been taxed to quite as great an extent as can be borne. If the facts already set forth, or those that are to follow, are doubted, we advise the doubters to form circles amongst their friends, or in their families; observe the directions hereafter given, and induce the proper conditions, and they can have them for themselves; then there will be no danger of being deceived. Unless they are willing to comply with this requisition, and make an *honest*, persevering effort (which will certainly be crowned with success), their doubts and objections are of but little value either to themselves or others.

"The question has many times been asked, Why do spirits perform such strange and antic capers? If they are spirits that do these things, they must be bad spirits, &c. To this question we would answer, these demonstrations are necessary to induce the proper conditions, in the mediums and circles, for a higher order of communications. If the why and wherefore are desired, we again repeat, form circles; have them for yourselves, and a satisfactory explanation will attend them.

"Those who first entered upon the investigation, having become so deeply interested in the subject, many of them could not resist the temptation of inviting their friends, occasionally, to visit the circle and witness the doings there; by this means the meetings

would often be so large, that many could not be accommodated satisfactorily, and frequently the harmony of the circle would be disturbed by scurrilous remarks from some sceptical intruders, and the object of the meeting defeated.

"The meetings having thus become very large, and often inharmonious, and the conditions necessarily more or less disturbed, it was thought best to organize a private circle, which was done on Monday evening, February 24th, 1851. Ten persons constituted the first regularly organized circle in this city; this number was subsequently increased, from time to time, to eighteen. The organization was called 'Philadelphia Harmonial Circle, A.'

"It was at this meeting of the private circle where the powerful demonstrations, above alluded to, commenced. The circle held their meetings strictly private, with occasionally rare exceptions, on Saturday, Sunday, and Wednesday evenings, at the houses of the members. After this change in the arrangements, the little gatherings became more and more intensely interesting, new developments were continually being made, and the progression was rapid. It became the policy of the members to say but very little, out of the circle, of what transpired within it. The minds of the people were known not to be prepared for the statements that might be made. No effort whatever was made to influence the public mind in favor of the subject. Strenuous efforts were made to preserve it from the public notice. The charges of selfishness and exclusiveness were incurred to a great extent. Many minds, however, became honestly and anxiously interested in the matter; as these were discovered, opportunities were given, at their requests, to be gratified by means of accommodation meetings. As the interest increased, these meetings became more and more frequent, sometimes amounting to two or three a week, for the accommodation of different companies. Frequently they were highly interesting, and occasionally favored with convincing physical demonstrations. The circle mostly received kindness and hospitality from those strangers whose invitations they received;

occasionally, however, the treatment towards them was rude and indecorous; this invariably came from invited guests, who, for once in their lives, had got into society who knew what civility was.

"The deep and abiding interest, that had taken hold on the minds of many, moved them to action, and, nearly simultaneously, by them were instituted several new circles, some of which being composed of discordant elements soon disorganized and gave up the work, but most of them have persevered and are doing exceedingly well; some have been favored with various manifestations in the way of preparing mediums, &c., and one of the new circles has already received several important communications.

"Here again was a new field of labor opened for circle A. They were in almost every case, in the formation of a new circle, called upon to visit them, to aid them by their experience, and encourage them onward in their labors of love and goodness. The regular tri-weekly meetings of the circle, the frequent accommodation meetings, and the visiting of new circles, for weeks occupied all their leisure time, and in fact often drew largely on that portion of it devoted to business. Several afternoons were given to the gratification of honest and candid inquirers. Thus commenced and progressed the great work in the city of Philadelphia.

"Shortly after the formation of circle A, several members commenced being operated on by the spirits in the manner before described; sometimes they would begin to be affected immediately upon taking their seats at the table; at other times they would remain seated some quarter or half an hour before the process commenced; when this was the case, and conditions favorable, the responses would be free and loud; but after the operations commenced with the new or undeveloped mediums, no more answers to questions could be obtained during the continuance of the process. The first medium was also, at times, made the subject of exercises more or less severe. Upon one occasion, when she was being operated upon, and before the circle had become in a condi-

tion to receive instructions in relation to the mediums, strong efforts were made to get responses to questions, but without effect. All this time a succession of raps was heard upon the table; several questions were asked, with a view of ascertaining what was meant by them, but no answer was given. At length one asked, 'Is the alphabet desired?' To this there was an affirmative answer. One of the members commenced repeating it, when the following sentence was spelled out: 'You cannot have responses while we are operating on the mediums.' Shortly after another signal for the alphabet was given, when the following was communicated: 'Always let the medium repeat the alphabet.' This was the second effort at spelling, and was much more prompt than the first; the sentences were spelled out by the spirit of the medium's mother. This occurred on the 8th of March, 1851.

"At the next meeting, held March 9th, the circle, unmindful of what had been told them, were again very solicitous of getting responses while the mediums were being acted on, when the following was spelled out in like manner: 'The medium is not in a condition to have good responses to-night.' Again: 'They are preparing mediums for other circles.' After this efforts were seldom made to get answers to questions while the mediums were under spiritual training.

"This process of preparation consists of a kind of mesmeric condition, induced entirely by spiritual influence, which, as it progresses, carries the subject deeper and deeper into insensibility. If it be not resisted or interfered with, it will generally pass off in from one to two hours.

"Upon two or three occasions private meetings of the circle were held, and continued for two and a half hours, without a single response or manifestation, further than operating on the mediums; the whole of the evening being consumed in that way."

In this pamphlet I find the first account of communicating by the card, which is given as follows:

"This mode of communication consists in the medium taking a card, when a communication is desired, and commencing by voluntarily passing the hand over it, touching every letter with the fore-finger. Often the hand will be required to pass over it repeatedly before any unnatural sensation is experienced, when a feeling of numbness will begin to be perceived, which will increase, attended by a more or less convulsive motion. As the hand continues its exercises the movement becomes altogether involuntary; the motion now becomes increased, and the hand is made to pass over the card with almost incredible rapidity, attended with convulsive jerkings more or less severe. Sometimes it is very great, causing the hand to strike the card or the table upon which it lies with great violence. This is continued for some time, when the finger will be observed to rest on a certain letter, attended with a shoving or rubbing motion; instantly it will be seen to fly to another, and then another; these letters taken down will be found to make words, and these words placed together make sentences. In this way long and highly interesting communications are spelled out with a rapidity, requiring a very expert penman to write them down as fast as they are given. The medium, or any other person, watches the finger and gives out the words as they are formed. The violence with which the hand is used becomes abated as the medium becomes more fully developed, and better control is got of its movements. At length no inconvenience is experienced, and words are spelled out with the utmost ease and comfort. This is a much more perfect mode of communication than the former, and is altogether more preferable. In this manner spirits are able to converse through mediums long before they can make the sounds. Thus important information is communicated to circles, and encouragement given to them for weeks before responses are heard. After the mediums become sufficiently developed to have the raps, and the conditions being favorable, every word that is pronounced from the card will be responded to; thereby signifying its correctness. In this way, also, can familiar conversations be held with the spirits,

questions answered, and explanations given in every case where they are wished, to the entire satisfaction of those desiring information, from the higher spheres, upon any subject, however important or trivial."

The same pamphlet also gives the following brief account of the first writing media in that city:

"The third mode, though as yet but imperfectly developed, promises to be far superior even to the second. Two mediums belonging to the same circle (E) commenced communicating in this way, within twelve hours of each other, the last to commence not having seen the performance of the first. They had both been communicating by the card for some time previously; and the only direction they had upon the subject was contained in the following sentence, spelled out by the card: 'Take the pencil in your hand.' This was done in the case of the first one, when the hand commenced violent convulsive motions, which continued for some time, when, by an involuntary motion of the hand over the paper, a short sentence was written, and with a rapidity exceeding five times the speed of her ordinary writing. The second medium was impressed to take the pencil, when the same involuntary convulsive motion seized the hand, and continued for some time, when a short sentence was, in like manner with the first, written on the paper, with equal rapidity. This mode is also being practised by other mediums in this city and other places."

Some of the communications given to the circles were intended for their instruction as they progressed in their investigation. I have selected a few from a number published in the pamphlet:

"TWO COMMUNICATIONS, ACCOUNTING FOR CONTRADICTIONS.

"1. *Given May 13th, in the afternoon, from a Father to his Son.*

"MY DEAR SON: You were rather sceptical when you entered the room, but your mind is more favorably impressed now with

these manifestations. Thus will it be with every one who investigates them with candor. None shall go away many times unconvinced, if they come in a proper spirit. Those who do not are not generally convinced, for they are not prepared to receive the great truths we would utter. And we take no pains to convert them, for their minds would not bear what we would teach them. They must possess an honest, inquiring spirit, if they wish to learn the truth of us. If they do not they will rarely learn the truth of these manifestations, but denounce it as a deception, and one unworthy the attention of any. You have come in a different spirit from this. And, therefore, when you hear the contradictory accounts given of our communications, think of what we have here been able to tell you, and you will know the cause and come to a correct conclusion. Now, my son, these are the words of your father; believe what he tells you, for he has learned more than it is possible for mortals to find out; and, therefore, is better able to guide in the way of truth. Done.

"2. *To a Gentleman from his Sister, May 13th, in the evening.*

"My dear Brother: You were sceptical when you came here, but you have changed your opinions now. No one, who will come and ask us questions honestly and candidly, shall go away unsatisfied, if conditions are favorable for communications. We are anxious for all mankind to be convinced of the truth of spiritual communications. But if persons come to the investigation of it determined to prove it deception, we will take no pains to satisfy them in their answers; for a person possessing such a disposition is not prepared to receive our instruction. He must go through some preparatory process before he can receive our teachings. We want this well understood, so that the friends to the communications will be able to account for the contradictory accounts given of our communications. They will then know the reason, and will not be troubled at it. Keep this before your mind, and when you hear such things said, remember what we have told you, and you will not be confused about it.

"Circle A made an agreement to meet the spirits at eight o'clock in the evening, and adjourn at half past ten. Sometimes, in the midst of most interesting responses and manifestations, they would rap off 'Done,' precisely at that hour. Under these circumstances an extension of time would be requested, which would sometimes be granted, after the following short communication was received:

"'If you want an extension of time, at any meeting, you must apply for it before it is near out. It was your own proposal to close at that time, and now you must abide the result. We were willing to converse with you much longer, but you made objections. G. D. H.'

"A circumstance occurred in which one of the mediums was concerned. She and some friends had been out one evening, and, on their return home, stopped at the house of another friend. The lady had no sooner taken a seat than she went into the mesmeric state, when raps were heard, giving the signal for the alphabet. It was repeated, when the following important sentence was spelled out by raps. This occurred previously to the discovery of any other mode of communicating: —

"'You must take care of ——— to-night; she is to fall out of the window and kill herself. She must remain where she is to-night.'

"The spirits were asked if she should be informed of the fact when awake. The answer was, 'No.'

"She was not informed of the communication, but yielded to the solicitations of her friends, and remained with the family during the night, and was secretly watched. She was observed in the night to get up, dress herself, and go down into the dining-room, in the second story, raise the blinds of a window, and attempt to raise the window, when she was taken hold of by those watching, and prevented from proceeding further. She was in an

unusually deep sleep, from which it was difficult to arouse her. This occurred in the presence of several persons of acknowledged veracity, — members of circle A, — who can testify to the facts.

"The lady, for some years previously, had been subject to attacks of somnambulism, and once before attempted to get out of a second-story window, but was prevented by a friend, who discovered her in time to avoid accident."

Hitherto no attempt at organization of effort on the part of spiritualists had taken place, except the mere business of the circle.

During the winter of 1851 the attention of the public was called by advertisement in the papers to some meetings instituted for the purpose of elucidating these mysterious problems. Those who called the meetings, and took charge of them, seemed, however, to be but little qualified for the purpose they had undertaken; but as these meetings were attended by some spiritualists it was thought best to continue them. After making some change in the plan of the meetings, and also of some officers, they were so continued, and on March 16th, 1852, a communication, substantially as follows, was received through one of the mediums:

"The objects of the communications and manifestations now being made to the world by spirits are for the advancement of the human race. All who are so favored as to be enabled to hold communion with spirits are particularly called upon to labor for the temporal and spiritual advancement of those who are dwelling in darkness. Those who receive instruction from us must expect to labor, and seek to alleviate the suffering existing in their midst. It will be well for you to meet once a week to consider what you can best do to accomplish your object. The world now requires your earnest efforts. In your very midst many are enshrouded in spiritual darkness, upon whom you must bestow light. Physical suffering has the effect of injuring the spirit, and you must, therefore, seek to alleviate the former. It would be well for you, when you meet, to appoint four or six of your number to inquire into the

condition of the suffering in your immediate vicinity, and for them to report the result of their labors at the next meeting; and we will instruct you in the course to pursue to insure their rapid advancement. You should request the coöperation of all who are interested in the subject, as well as of those whom you think would be willing to unite with you in your mission. The command which Jesus gave to his followers, to go into the market-places, and bid all to enter into his vineyard, is still binding upon those who earnestly desire to be followers of him."

In accordance with this direction, the friends of the spiritual philosophy, which seeks rather to present its claims to the world as an *active worker* in this busy arena of antagonistic strife, than to fold its arm six days out of seven, at least so far as the advancement of the soul's proper growth is concerned, and spending the other in trying to outdo the ancient mythologies in the vastness of its faith, — those friends met, and proceeded to effect an organization by the appointment of a committee to draft a preamble and constitution, setting forth the objects of the association, and presenting an outline of the rules by which the body was to be governed in future action. I cannot in any way set forth the nature of the organization better than by a synopsis of the preamble and laws as adopted by the meeting, upon the report of the committee, with some amendments.

"PREAMBLE.

"Whereas, as all ages of the world and of man have given rise to special demands, meet for the requirements of the necessities of the race, so, too, has this, in which it is our province to move, also its demands. And as the institutions of the past and the present have well-nigh closed their mission, and answered the purposes of their creation in the discipline of our minds and hearts, so are we looking for the advent of a diviner life and a better hope. In answer to this demand are the voices from the spirit-land, cheering us on in the work of human elevation and redemp-

tion in our spiritual, intellectual and social natures. In obedience to the directions of our spiritual guides do we hereby organize an institution whose object shall be the spiritual cultivation of man, and the alleviation of some of the many woes by which he is so sadly burthened. With no master but God, and no creed but humanity, do we enter the field of our labors, recognizing in man the latent germ of a divine nature, which, when duly cultivated, is the highest rule of right in human action. And we would, furthermore, seek to cultivate the radiant beauty of this faith in our intercourse with our fellow-men, as far as we are able so to do.

"In the furtherance of these noble purposes do we ordain the following constitution:

"ART. 1. The title of this association shall be the Harmonial Benevolent Association of Philadelphia.

"2. The objects of this association shall be those set forth in the preamble.

"3. The officers shall consist of a Circle of Directors, a President and Vice-President, Recording Secretary, Corresponding Secretary, Treasurer, Executive Committee and two Ushers; all of whom shall be elected semi-annually.

"4. The duties of the Circle of Directors shall consist in imparting the principles of motion, life, sensation and intelligence, to the association; to provide the instrumentalities of intellectual progress by procuring suitable persons to address the public meetings of the association; to propose such means as will best secure pecuniary aid for the relief of the suffering; to organize and maintain an efficient choir for the meetings; and to attend to such other affairs as the exigences of the occasion may require.

"The duties of the President and Vice-President are to see that order and harmony prevail at all meetings of the association.

"Of the Secretary, to keep the records of the association, and attend to such other duties as may pertain to his office.

"Of the Treasurer, to receive all moneys of the association, and hold them subject to its regular orders.

"Of the Executive Committee, to tender the sympathies and

assistance of the association to those who are sick, in trouble, or distress, and to extend the same to all human society, as far as possible, irrespective of sect, complexion, or country.

"Of the Ushers, to make such arrangements as shall best contribute to the comfort and convenience of the members and visitors of the meeting.

"5. As it is the design of the association to promote its benign ends through the willing aid and coöperation of such persons as may by affinity be attracted toward us, it shall, therefore, be in order for any persons to become members of the institution by declaring their wish to that effect at a previous meeting to their signing the constitution; provided that there shall be no objections on the part of a member. Should there be any objection, such objection shall be considered and disposed of by a vote of the members present, and the applicant admitted or rejected accordingly.

"6. All elections shall be by ballot."

Some other articles follow, specifying the time and place of election, the mode of procedure in case of the alteration of the constitution, &c., not of interest to the general reader, and they are therefore omitted.

It will now be perceived that the objects of the association are two-fold. First, that of ministering to the physical needs of the down-trodden, the vicious and the diseased; and, second, the dissemination of the sublime and glorious light unfolded to us, teaching the true purposes of the present life, and the best means of developing the latent energies of the spirit, by which it shall be unfolded and fitted for the diviner joys of that life which is to come; and also the nature of that future existence into which a thousand million of human souls will, in a few brief years, have entered, and its sublime realities become part of their experience, and recorded upon the tablets of the inner shrine of the spirit.

The association adopted the title of the Harmonial Benevolent Association at the suggestion of the spirits, and they have endeavored to act in accordance with that title. It is true but little,

comparatively, has been done. Nor is it to be expected that a few persons, with but limited resources, could stop the course of that mighty tide of sorrow and death, which sweeps over the land like some destroying angel, and which speaks too plainly of the terrible infractions of those laws of order and harmony, on the observance of which the world's physical redemption depends. Nor is it to be expected that the bitter fruits of transgression can cease to flow while the roots are deeply seated and hourly watered and irrigated by an inverted social order, tending ever to the realization of those fearful harvests which, like some mighty maelstrom, engulf their annual millions, and send them into another sphere to learn those lessons of wisdom and goodness which they should have learned in this. What is done in this way is chiefly palliative, and tends somewhat to temper down the sorrows of life. It is not the purpose to boast of what is done, nor should I at this time mention the fact, were it not for the purpose of stating the nature and objects of the Philadelphia Harmonial Benevolent Association, and, with this brief narration, shall let this part of the subject pass, with the statement that it is the purpose of the association to continue to do the best they can, without parade or noise, or solicitation of foreign resources.

It has been now nearly three years since the commencement of this movement, and, with but little interruption, there have been kept up in this city regular weekly meetings for the benefit of the public, to which they have been invited, free of expense, to hear lectures explanatory of the spiritual philosophy, so far as that matter was understood, and also public conference meetings, at which an immense amount and variety of phenomena were narrated, which occurred in the experience of individuals themselves. It is a little more than two years since the public meetings have been held on each Sunday morning and evening at Franklin Hall. These meetings have been deemed of sufficient interest to ensure the regular attendance of large and intelligent audiences. Either the morning or evening is occupied by a lecture, the other meeting being a conference, where all spiritualists

have an equal opportunity for the occupancy of the speaker's stand.

Aside from this association there have been several attempts to effect a general organization of the circles; but, for some reason, these efforts have not been attended with much success. Indeed, even the circles themselves have no very effectual organization, owing, probably, to the continuous pressure from without of persons desirous of witnessing the manifestations, and the disposition of the members to afford all the opportunity in their power to inquirers.

The history of spiritualism in this city is not, however, without some divisions of sentiment, and may be classed under two general heads. First, those who still cherish a sanctity for those early loves which, by education, become almost part of our nature, and who, hence, feel that there is a sacredness hovering around the Bible not attaching itself to other books. Also those who still cherish some of their former opinions in reference to the efficacy of prayer, the divinity of Jesus, &c. The second class is composed of those who feel cut loose from all authority of both Bible and church, and who seek to attain to a more perfect knowledge of both God and man by a study of the great book of Nature, as transmitted by the Creator to his children. Both these classes are doing an effectual work in the redemption of mind, since both are more liberal than before, and more reasonable in their differences with one another and the world without. Nor have we anything to fear from a difference of opinion, so long as *reason* is to be the arbiter. The only enemy spiritualism need have to dread will be the disposition to *sectarize* it, and to bind the minds of its recipients to some supposed *authority* or creed.

CHAPTER XII.

MANIFESTATIONS AT TROY AND WATERFORD, N. Y. — EXCITEMENT AND VIOLENCE AT TROY — ATTEMPT TO DESTROY THE LIFE OF THE MEDIUM — INCREASE OF THE MANIFESTATIONS — REMARKABLE CASES, &C.

THE advent of the spiritual manifestations into Troy was attended with some remarkable displays of bigotry and violence, which should be recorded among the attendant circumstances of this new development. The first medium there was Miss Margaretta Fox. She went in the month of November, 1850, to the house of Mr. Bouton, where the friends were invited to hear the manifestations.

From some cause which remains unexplained, a portion of the Irish Catholics became very much incensed against the "new doctrine," and evinced a determination to put it down by violence. They evidently supposed that, by destroying this medium, the whole matter would be put to rest. Accordingly she was watched and followed everywhere, so that it was not considered safe for her to leave the house unattended. Finally they became so determined that the house was attacked, but, being well prepared, the assassins were not successful. The following extract from a letter written by the gentleman with whom she was stopping, will throw more light upon the subject. It bears date of West Troy, November 13th, 1850.

"We are endeavoring to make an arrangement for her (Margaretta) to go to another place. If she has mentioned the name to you, do not mention it to others, as you value her life. A

deep plot is laid to destroy her. My house is beset every night by assassins after her, and we guard her every moment. We think, if we can place her where we wish to, she will be safe. I shall defend her and her reputation at the risk of my fortune and my life. I will advise you of our progress. *Suppress the name of the place, if you can.* I write with difficulty, not having rested for some nights. Five Irishmen, from some motive, are watching Margaretta; we have seen them all together. She has never left my family without being attended, which has given them no opportunity yet. In returning from Troy, late night before last, with my family and Margaretta, in a coach, we came to the river, and found no boat. Five drunken Irishmen tried to persuade our driver to go to the long 'Troy Bridge,' a glorious place for murder. We did not go, but they followed us home, and, after we had retired, the Irishmen attempted to break into the room occupied by Margaretta and my sister-in-law. They were furious on being foiled, and threw stones against the house. I have prepared means of defence, and cannot sleep much, and my family less. I fear they will return again to-night; but they will meet with a warm reception. Last night Mrs. B. and Margaretta went to the door of a shed together, and a stone was thrown at them. One man on the roof made an angry exclamation on finding that the two were together, instead of Margaretta alone. They were large, stout men."

A postscript to this letter, dated the next day, the 14th, says:

"As I feared, the Irishmen *did* return last night, and threw a stone through the window, and broke into the house; but we were prepared for them, and they did not effect anything. We would like to have you come here immediately, if you can."

The mob continued to increase on Saturday night, and on Sunday five telegraphic dispatches were sent to Mrs. Fish, at Rochester, to come to Troy. The purport of the messages was that

Margaretta was alive; but they could not tell how long she would be. The next morning Mrs. F. started for Troy. After she had changed cars at Schenectady, and taken a seat in the Troy car, a large, animal-looking Irishman came to her, and asked where she was going. She replied to Troy. He then wanted to know if she had relatives there. Her replies gave them no clue to the house she expected to go to, as she had previously received a letter putting her on her guard. The man stepped to another part of the car, and held a close consultation with two others, also Irish, and then returned and took a seat by her side, although there were plenty of vacant seats, being only seven passengers in the car. He again commenced his impertinent questions, and finally Mrs. F. left and took another seat. He followed, and took a seat by her side. She then requested him to leave, which he refused to do. The conductor was called, and the Irishman was made to take another seat.

All this, as might have been expected, aroused her suspicions, and she feared that in some way they had anticipated her arrival, and intended to do her some violence. She was constantly watched by the three men, and they as continually consulted together, evidently about her. It had been arranged by her friends that she should stop at the Troy House, and when they arrived there, she arose with great fear, as it was eight o'clock in the evening and very dark. She stepped out on the platform of the car, and saw, by the lamp-light, a carriage standing in front of the Troy House, and supposed it to be for her, as arranged. Just then a small old gentleman stepped up and looked her in the face, and said, "I am all right. I know it is Leah, by Margaretta's looks — hush! there 's the carriage;" and another gentleman stepping to the other side, each with loaded pistols, guarded her to the carriage. As she was shown in, three pistols lay on the seat, the sight of which frightened her nearly as much as the ruffians. Although she had not been to Troy, and was not known there, the whole crowd knew that she had been telegraphed for, and was expected. The telegraph operator was supposed to

have betrayed his trust, and communicated the fact to the crowd. A large number followed the carriage, and when they arrived at the house, the mob had collected in front of it to the number of some hundreds. She had been instructed that, when the carriage arrived, two or three chosen men would open the door and suddenly rush out and *carry* her in. Accordingly, the instant the carriage stopped, this plan was faithfully put into execution. As she entered, she found Margaretta vomiting severely from the effects of fright and excitement, having part of the time, for the last forty-eight hours, been confined in a small room, for fear the house would be entered by the mob, who were assembling and prowling around the house, in defence of their religion, as they were constantly declaring. After all had arrived safely in the house, several shots were fired through the windows, and stones were thrown. The crowd made all manner of threats, and did what they could to put them into execution. They knew that the men inside were armed, and would meet violence with violence. This appeal to such a mode of defence, in such a cause, is to be regretted; but with such a crowd, urged on by more discreet, cowardly and "respectable" persons, it is doubtful if any other appeal is potent enough to be felt by them. They dispersed after a time, but the family and house were threatened until the "unholy" guests had left. They were still determined to execute their plans, and, supposing Margaretta had returned to Rochester, those same three Irishmen found their way to the house of Mrs. Fish. They were foiled in this attempt, for she and Margaretta were then staying at the Delevan House, in Albany.

Such was the advent of the spiritual manifestations in Troy. I give a detailed account of the excitement, as many really fancy that it was a pleasant task, at that time, to go about the country preaching spiritual truth. It is only one of the many trying scenes of persecution that this family have passed through. I would by no means leave the impression that the Catholics were the only ones engaged in this crusade. It was abundantly proved that some of the prominent members of Protestant sects were

engaged in pushing forward this demonstration of heat without light.

From this time the demonstrations have continued more or less abundant in East and West Troy, and the neighboring village of Waterford. As these places are near together, and the circles of the two places frequently intermingle, I shall speak of both of them as the facts may present themselves. In both places they have rapping, writing, tipping and pantomimic mediums, — and through them some most wonderful, beautiful and truthful communications are made. With the exception of Mr. Boynton, of Waterford, I do not now remember the names of mediums at Troy or Waterford.

As part of the history of the important events, I give the following from the *Troy Daily Post*, of June, 1851 :

"On the afternoon of Monday last, June 2d, Mr. N. E. White, a well-known spiritual medium of this city, being somewhat indisposed, was mesmerized by Mr. R——, and while thus paralyzed, spirits, purporting to be those of certain deceased friends of Mr. White and the family in which he boards, took that occasion to *forewarn* his friends that some events were to occur on the evening of the following Friday, which were to be imminently fearful, and perhaps fatal to the life of Mr. White; and that, as a means of preventing the worst consequences, they (the invisibles) were particularly urgent that his friends should guard him with the utmost vigilance, promising at the same time all the aid it was in their power to render for his relief in the case. On the following Wednesday the patient was again put in a state of unconsciousness, and the spirits communicated as follows: 'Remember Friday night; watch him close, or you will lose him; we will do all we can, but can do but little.' Some half dozen of the personal friends of the family were duly notified of these facts, and being of those who are convinced of the verity of modern spiritual manifestations, all awaited the issue with apprehensions more or less fearful.

"It may be well, perhaps, in this connection, to state that Mr. White has, within a few months past, been several times paralyzed, as we suppose by spiritual influence, in which case he appears wholly insensible, his limbs fixed, and his muscles rigid and inactive; and whether his condition is produced in this way, or by the ordinary process of mesmerizing, it is morally certain he has not the least recollection of anything which may have taken place during its continuance. His friends were, therefore, enabled to keep him wholly ignorant of the foreboding communications. Up to nine o'clock on Friday evening nothing worthy of note had transpired, except that he complained some that afternoon and evening of headache and dizziness. At about ten o'clock, feeling turns of nausea at the stomach, he retired for the night. Scarcely had he laid down, before he was perceived to be in a paralyzed or magnetic state; and the spirits announced that 'the crisis is now come; he will die to-night, or be well to-morrow.' His feet and legs became cold, and his whole physical system was evidently sinking with fearful rapidity. The spirits directed his feet and limbs to be rubbed.

"*Ques.* Shall we put them in warm water?

"*Ans.* (By the spirits.) No; it will affect his head.

"At this time the patient breathed with great irregularity, — indeed, at times his breathing was almost or quite suspended, — his pulse extremely fluttering and fitful, gasping at times, accompanied with gurgling in the throat, as if death had nearly done its work.

"*Q.* What can we do?

"*A.* Rub his limbs thoroughly; *we* will take care of his throat.

"At this the patient's hand was moved in mesmeric passes over his throat and breast, which seemed in part to relieve his breathing.

"*Q.* Shall we send for a physician?

"*A.* No.

"*Q.* But will he not die on our hands? — the responsibility is more than we are willing to assume.

"*A.* If he has a physician he will surely die.

"*Q.* Will you be able to carry him through?

"*A.* It is doubtful; we fear we cannot save him.

"Soon after this, however, in answer to inquiries, the promises were more encouraging; and, in a few minutes more, the spirits expressed great confidence in their ability to restore his health, saying they 'must soon wake him up, and if he does not come out clear, we shall be obliged to paralyze him again.' The patient was soon restored to consciousness, but was unable to speak aloud, or to swallow water when put into his mouth with a teaspoon; breathed with much difficulty, and at several different and difficult efforts raised considerable quantities of blood. In whispers he expressed his belief that he was dying, and asked the opinion of his friends. Two hours had elapsed, in which the witnesses of this appalling scene had suffered with the most intense anxiety, and yet all was shrouded in mysterious and painful uncertainty.

"After remaining conscious, but exceedingly prostrate, for about half an hour, he became again paralyzed and insensible, and some one put to the spirits the following:

"*Q.* Why do you paralyze him when it is attended with such fearful consequences?

"*A.* It is not the sleep that injures him; — we do it for his good.

"He remained in this state some twenty or thirty minutes, during which the paroxysms were more distressing, more terribly frightful, than any that had preceded them; and, judging from external appearances, the pulseless, breathless, ghastly and sunken aspect of the mortal organism, all present felt sure that it had passed the period of reanimation; but, while in the bitter agonies of despair, they received the following spiritual communication:

"'Do not be frightened, it will do no good; he is almost gone, but we think we can save him.'

"In about ten minutes from this time he was restored to a conscious state, and, though in considerable distress, was soon relieved by magnetic friction; and after a swoon, which was of short dura-

tion, appeared more bright and cheerful than at any time for the three hours preceding. From then to the present time his recovery has been regular and rapid.

"After all that has been said, in the condensed form in this article, it must necessarily be but a meagre outline, an abridgment, of the thrilling incidents witnessed, in all their appalling details, by those in whose presence these singular and memorable occurrences took place.

"Though not present on Friday night, the writer had been previously notified of these spiritual predictions of an impending catastrophe, the peculiarities of which were only to be developed in the denouement. He has, however, from his familiar acquaintance with most of the witnesses, no doubt of the correctness of their statement of facts, which are but feebly set forth in the above.

"WELCOME WHITAKER.

"Troy, June 7th, 1851.

"We, the undersigned, having been present at the house of Wood Babcock, in this city, on Tuesday night last, and then and there witnessing the scenes noted in the above statements, freely declare the same to be substantially correct, though falling far short of a full statement of all that transpired on that occasion.

WOOD BABCOCK, SOPHIA BABCOCK,
MAHALE DENISON, J. H. RAINY,
JULIA F. SHELDON."

There are other published accounts of the manifestations in Troy, sometime previous to this — as early as the month of November, 1850; but they contain no particulars of more interest than the above.

Mr. D. B. King, who became interested in these manifestations at an early day, writes from Waterford to the *Spirit World*, under date of Feb. 6th, 1851, as follows:

"I was much gratified and instructed, on Monday evening last, while witnessing a few spiritual manifestations, while stopping at

Cohoes, N. Y. The medium was Mrs. T——, an elderly lady. Before we were engaged making inquiries, Mrs. T—— read to us a communication, which was received from the spirit-world, on Monday afternoon, relative to us. The medium was advised that in our presence reliable responses would be made.

"About seven o'clock in the evening a company of four, — myself, son, Mr. and Mrs. T——, — gathered around the table. Mrs. T—— commenced making passes over the table, in order to establish a communication. Soon after, various raps were heard on the table. The following questions were offered, and answers received:

"*Ques.* Have I a guardian angel present?

"*Ans.* Yes (by three raps).

"*Q.* Will that guardian spirit communicate its name?

"*A.* Yes.

"I commenced reading over the several names I had prepared, requesting the spirit to give his usual signal when the right name was pronounced. Repeating several names, Seth Y. Young was announced; immediately three loud and distinct raps on the table saluted our ears, signifying that the last name mentioned was the name of my guardian angel.

"*Q.* Have I more than one guardian?

"*A.* Yes.

"Several names being called, *Vilo Lena* responded to us as the correct name. I had been familiar with these two names, for several years past, as those of my guardian spirits, having obtained this knowledge through previous revelations.

"*Q.* Has the society of Shakers, at Watervliet, received responses from the spirit-world in the manner we receive them?

"*A.* Yes.

"*Q.* How many — four times, three times, twice, once?

"*A.* Yes (once). — Correct.

"After I had received several responses, I called for the spirit of my mother. She was present, and her signal was given.

"*Q.* How long have you been *dead?* — No answer.

"*Q.* How long since you left the form?

"A prompt answer was given, spirits preferring the expression *left the form* to that of death.

"Subsequently I received an incorrect answer to a question proposed, when I remarked rather severely as follows: 'I shall receive no communication whatever from any spirit that will tell lies. The spirits must answer me correctly, or not at all.' My guardian spirit then manifested himself, gave his signal, which was recognized by all in the room, and subsequent responses were correct. * * * * * I proposed to the spirits to give us some tests of their power by manifesting some physical force on the table. Instantly raps in rapid succession were made, continually louder and louder, resembling the combined raps of scores of spirits, and so frequently that it was impossible to number them or distinguish their signals. These sounds continued for about one minute, when the table moved about two inches. At the close the spirits spelled out the following: 'Be patient, we will do the best we can.'"

I give the following, as a specimen of the communications they sometimes receive in that vicinity. It was originally published in the *Spiritual Telegraph:*

"'What spirit so influences me?'

"'Darius Jaques.'

"'What would Darius Jaques please?'

"'I want to have a talk.'

"'What would Darius Jaques please to talk about?'

"'I want to talk about past things, present things, and things that are not yet. Of things past, I was intimately acquainted with your parents, in Canada, when you were a child; and before you were a child. I was subsequently acquainted with them in what was then called the Genesee country. I spent much time with them very agreeably. I suppose I saw you, but you were so young I have not much recollection about it. I, many years ago, left my earthly tenement, by a distressing dis-

ease in the head. Some called it dropsy in the head. I suppose it was caused by snuff-taking and other irregularities — violations of nature's laws — habits contracted in early life — that grew to be my masters, all my philosophy to the contrary notwithstanding.

"'During my earthly sojourn I was an attentive observer of men and things — an investigator of principles. I took an active part in the great political warfare that succeeded the adoption of the Constitution of the United States, so called. * * * But soon I had the chagrin to find that good Democrats out of power were soon metamorphosed into Federalists in power. This, as might be expected, was a damper on my party zeal. From thence I became a looker-on, — a not always silent spectator of the miserable scrambles for power. The once significant, distinguishing cognomens — Federalist and Democrat — now had become meaningless; or, if they meant anything, Democrat meant *out of* power; Federalist, *in* power. All were clamorous for RIGHTS *before* election; but if elected, they all acted very much alike — seeming to consider that power was safe enough in *their* hands, but *not* safe in other people's.

"'This and other things set me to investigating the principles that govern the world — the springs to human action. I saw that men were monopolizers, — not in politics only, but in everything, — in money; in land; in power, — even in *religion.*

"'The Jews, as a nation, had scraped up into their heap the entire of Heaven's regards. Other nations did the same, though not all to the same degree. The Pharisees scraped up an extra heap on top of the national heap, regarding the masses as of no account in the estimation of high Heaven. The disciples of the Nazarene considered their own dear selves the only "Simon Pures," and soon fell into a quarrel as to which of *them* should be the biggest bug. And this kind of quarrel has existed, more or less, among his professed followers, to this day.

"'The Nazarene was a plain practical man; he was no monopolizer; he was strictly and radically, in all his doctrines, in his practices, a Democrat. He was, philosophically and truthfully

speaking, the great apostle of democracy. But no sooner did selfish and designing men, by feigned humility, reach places of trust among his professed followers, than they commenced a series of operations, or machinations to centralize the powers, — individually to monopolize the rights that belonged to the whole, — to create in themselves a gigantic, irresponsible power, clothed with the dread sovereignty of Heaven. Such has been, and still is, the tendency of what I should call the federal instincts of mortal men, in matters of religion the same as in politics, — they are both one.

"'The Congregational platform is the only right principle for religious association; but this cannot succeed well when the bond of *integrity* is wanting in the people, — hence it behoves all who are desirous of availing themselves of the benefits of religious association to commence the preparatory work by removing, each from his or her own midst, the monopolizing propensity; or, as the Nazarene would say, "Deny self," — squaring themselves by the organic law of democracy. "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them," for this is the cardinal principle of true religion — of the true social state. This is the bond of integrity that binds all heaven together. Consequently, we may put down on the records of eternal ages that whoever makes a requirement of others, save in accordance with this divine principle, is a monopolist — an enemy to the rights of man.

"'As I have been an attentive observer of national affairs, and of men, I deem it not amiss nor out of place here to say, that of those who have figured largely in national affairs, John C. Calhoun, aside from his being the personification of that most odious relic of barbarism — the "PECULIAR INSTITUTION" of the south — was as purely and as ably democratic as any man that has graced the halls of national legislation.

"'In matters of religious and social reform, the present generation of earth's inhabitants has many master minds, — giant advocates of the moral, political, social and religious rights of man; some of them already are known to the world; some not so much

known, and there are some who have not yet appeared in public. These are invigorated, and miraculously strengthened, by the coöperation of the dwellers in our spheres. For the democratic principle has able and powerful advocates here, who have pledged their sacred all in defence of the "Eternal Right;" and this struggle between the two great antagonisms, right and wrong, liberty and oppression, is gaining increasing attention here, — and as the right gains the ascendency here, the influence will be felt by the dwellers in the first sphere; for our interests are one; our cause is one.'

"'Hold on, friend Jaques! It seems to me you are mixing up things. You override the hitherto-recognized distinctions between sacred and profane — mixing them all up together.'

"'They ought to be — must, and will be, overrode, and trampled into fine dust; and the breath of God, that is now shaking the dry bones, will drive it all away, and no more place will be found for it; for those distinctions are based on false principles, or rather on no principles. They are based on ignorance, selfishness, and consequent superstition; and as the living light — the light of life — of intelligent, intellectual and spiritual truth, advances, — and it *will* advance, — these false distinctions *must* go down.

"'The designing and the ignorant being thereunto moved, and seduced by their own lusts for unhallowed power, and mere animal enjoyments, have divided the days — which are in themselves all alike sacred and good — so as to call *one* sacred and *six* profane; leaving to themselves six sevenths of the days, and *all* of the nights, to act all manner of ways. In other things they have been no less liberal to their dear, unprogressed selves; making attendance upon the altar sacred — all other concerns of life profane, irresponsible.

"'Some of the ancients made to themselves one great God, and a host of little gods — a god to each inclination they wished to gratify. This theology they found quite convenient, for, let them do as they would, they were serving some one of the numerous

train of gods. The modern theologians are, in effect, the same, though less consistent with theory.

"'But now, the life and light-giving spirit of God has begun to move on the waters. A separation will be made. The light will be divided from the darkness; and here, between RIGHT AND WRONG, *the party-line will be drawn.* This will be the line between *sacred* and *profane.* All that is *sacred* will be on the right side of the line, — all that is *profane*, on the wrong.

"'And woe unto him that seeks again to commingle light and darkness — wrong and right — for, by so doing, he embodies in himself *heresy, treason, felony* and *all sin;* yea, verily I say unto you, woe unto him; for he has the reward of his iniquity treasured up in his own soul; and how shall he escape it? None will run after him, to add to his affliction. They need not; for, like the first Cain, his punishment will be greater than he can bear, and he will repent, or flee from the presence of the Lord, which shall beam forth in the countenances of the people; for they will be moved with pity for the unfortunate offender — not with revenge. Then, indeed, may the swords be used for trimming trees, and the big guns be melted and come out cast-iron ploughs. The people may dispense with their salaried clergy, and gaudy temples; with their judges, gallows and prisons; with their profligate masters, called public servants, and with their quarrelling, rowdying legislators. Great efforts are now in progress, in our sphere, and in the spheres above us, to accomplish this mighty end; and no power of darkness, nor *all* the powers of ignorance and error combined, can arrest the car of progress; for the Lord God omnipotent says, "Let there be light," and it *will* be so.

"'Now, my friend, I'll stop for the present, — for I perceive you are wearied with the length of my communication, if not with the depth of it. I thank you for the opportunity here afforded me to communicate some of my views on this, to me, all-engrossing theme. If anything here communicated will, in any way, contribute to the cause of common good, you will be paid for your trouble, — I am already paid.'"

At the present time they have many interesting and remarkable manifestations at the circles in both Troy and Waterford. One of the most remarkable cases is thus recorded by Mr. Elisha Waters, of Troy. He informed me of it soon after the occurrence, and afterward made the statement as follows in the *Spiritual Telegraph:*

"WATERFORD, N. Y., March 27th, 1853.

"MR. BRITTAN, — DEAR SIR: At a circle held in this village on the 5th of this month, there were some '*manifestations*' which bear so directly on the dispute in regard to the cause of the strange *phenomena* now so prevalent, that a brief account may not be uninteresting to your readers.

Several mediums, in various stages of development, were present, and a great variety of manifestations were made, mainly in the form of '*possession.*' In the course of the evening, Mr. John Prosser, a gentleman residing in Waterford, and subject to this *possession* in its most thorough form, was under the control of a spirit that announced that no one in the room ever knew or heard of him, but that he was drawn to the circle by strong attraction. He said he was over a hundred years old when he left the form; was a soldier in the Revolutionary War, and had frequently seen Washington, of whom he spoke with great reverence. He told us, as the result of his long experience, to do our own thinking, and to read the great Book of Nature for our guidance; but that we should not '*fight*' the church or the clergy, for their struggles would injure themselves more than others, and only help forward their approaching and long fore-written doom. He added, that the truth of spiritualism would now shine out without any aid from iconoclastic zeal. I should, perhaps, to do justice, say that he spoke of the church as having accomplished a work, and as about to die a natural death after its great mission had been fulfilled.

"I will give his closing remarks *verbatim et literatim.*

"'Now, this is every word true I'm telling ye. I'll tell ye,

so that if you've a mind to take a little pains, you can find out that this is *jest* exactly as I tell it ye. I lived at Point Pleasant, New Jersey, and if you want to know, you *jest* ask if old Uncle John Chamberlain did n't speak the truth.'

"He stopped speaking, and the usual signs of a change of possession followed, when some one remarked that it was a pity he had not given more particulars, as it would have been, under the circumstances, so thorough a *test*. It soon became evident that Mr. Prosser's grandfather (who is, in a sense, his 'guardian') had possession. He turned his face good-humoredly around the circle, and remarked, that, as he saw many were anxious to hear more from the 'old man,' he would come back for a little while. After a short interval of quiet, Mr. Prosser's whole manner changed to that which he had while the former speaker had possession, and these were his words:

"'My friends, I did not expect to speak with you again, but I want to give you this as a test. I died on Friday, the 15th day of January, 1847, and I was the father of eleven children. Now, if you've a mind to take a little pains, you will find this is all jest as I tell it ye. I don't talk as you do, but if you like to hear an old man, I will come again. Good-by, — I must go.'

"It would be impossible to give an adequate notion of the plain, unvarnished truthfulness which shone out through every word and gesture of his discourse. Other 'manifestations,' of a similar character, followed, and the circle broke up.

"On the following evening, a circle was held at another house, but few of the members of the former circle being present, with some other persons. Mr. Prosser was the only medium present. Old Uncle John Chamberlain made his appearance again, and repeated the *statistical* part of his communication, when it was found that the scribe had written *Pleasant Point*, instead of *Point Pleasant*.

"After finding out that there was such a post-office in New Jersey as the latter, and that the 15th of January did fall on

Friday in the year 1847, we wrote to the postmaster, and were informed that the 'old man' was strictly correct in his account of himself. We send you extracts from the letters received, which will suffice to show the remarkable fidelity of the spirit's statements to the facts of his personal history.

"'We, the undersigned, were present at the first circle, mentioned above, and think the account of it correct. We also affirm that we had never, to the best of our recollection, known or heard aught of John Chamberlain, or any of the facts connected with his life or death; nor did we know that there was such a place as Point Pleasant in New Jersey.

JOHN PROSSER,	E. WATERS,
SARAH S. PROSSER,	N. F. WHITE,
JULIET E. PERKINS,	MRS. N. D. ROSS,
A. A. THURBER,	N. D. ROSS,
LETTY A. BOYCE,	J. H. RAINEY,
ALBERT KENDRICK,	MRS. J. H. RAINEY.'

"LETTER TO THE POSTMASTER OF POINT PLEASANT.

"'TROY, February 23d, 1853.

"'DEAR SIR: Will you be kind enough to inform me if there has died in your town, within a few years, an aged man by the name of Chamberlain? If so, please give me the particulars of the time of his death, age, etc.; also, give me the name of one of the family with whom I can correspond.*

"'Very truly yours, E. WATERS.'

"THE ANSWER.

"'E. WATERS, — FRIEND: I received thy letter, dated 28th ult., requesting some information of John Chamberlain. With pleas-

"* FRIEND BRITTAN: After receiving the accompanying answer, I wrote again, making inquiry respecting the number of children he had, and received in reply that he had eleven; that two died in infancy, and that the remaining nine lived to be of age. Truly yours."

ure I will give thee a correct account, for I have known him well for fifty years, and lived a neighbor to him. He deceased January 15th, 1847, aged one hundred and four years. He had seven children that lived to be married; three of them have deceased and left children. He has four daughters living at this time; three of them are neighbors to me; the oldest daughter is a widow, seventy-eight years old; three have husbands; one of them lives twenty miles from me. As they have very little learning, they request thee to correspond with me. With pleasure I will give thee every information that lays in my power.

"'Very truly, thine,

"'THOMAS COOK.

"'Point Pleasant, 7th day March, 1853.

"'P. S. — He was a Revolutionary soldier; served in the war, and drew a small pension. T. C.'"

It would hardly be possible to state a stronger case than the foregoing, having a tendency to show, not only the fact of spirits communicating, but their absolute identity. But, as my business is to record facts, and not to form opinions, I leave the reader to judge of the legitimate conclusions to be drawn from these facts. Like all other places where the spiritual manifestations have been known, they have continued to spread and attract the attention of the citizens until it has ceased to be a matter of marvel that persons are found to believe in spiritual manifestations.

CHAPTER XIII.

MANIFESTATIONS IN CINCINNATI — VISIT OF MRS. BUSHNELL, THE MEDIUM — FIRST INVESTIGATIONS — VISIT OF THE FOX FAMILY — INCREASE OF BELIEVERS.

I AVAIL myself of a pamphlet compiled by Wm. T. Coggshall, of Cincinnati, in 1851, for a history of the first manifestations in that place. He makes the following statement:

"On the evening of the 26th of September, 1850, we had the pleasure of meeting Mrs. Bushnell with a select party at the house of Prof. J. R. Buchanan, the well-known Neurologist and editor of the *Journal of Man*, published in this city. During the course of the evening, Mrs. B. was impressed by the professor. She made generally accurate phrenological examinations of several gentlemen present, whom she had never seen before that evening, and who sat, during the examination, at the opposite side of the room from her. When Dr. Buchanan was about to awaken her from the clairvoyant state, she bid him stop, and entered upon a description of the appearance and character of the doctor's father, many years deceased. She gave a very correct description of his personal appearance, as compared with a portrait that was afterwards shown the company. After speaking of the doctor's father as spiritually present to her, she entered upon a lecture on spiritual conditions. We requested permission to ask the lady a few questions. It was granted. We inquired if we had recently lost a relative. She said we had, — that it was a person heavier than we are, — that he was at a distance west, — that he was going further west, — that he resembled us very much, — that he must

be a brother, — that he died suddenly of a disease of the stomach. She described his appearance perfectly, gave the peculiarities of his mind, and stated that he was in pursuit of an object by which he hoped to 'shine in the world;' that when he died he expressed many regrets; and she described effects and mementos, which we know he had with him, as perfectly as we could have done it. Her impressions of *all* the matters in reference to him, of which she spoke, were correct, as near as we can judge.

"After this interview, we had several opportunities of testing Mrs. B.'s clairvoyant powers, and we became convinced that, in many respects, and for many purposes, they were remarkable. During the interviews we had with Mrs. B. for clairvoyant investigations, we learned from her that the 'mysterious noises' had often been made in her presence, and that she had communicated with spirits by means of them. Our curiosity was excited, and we expressed a strong desire to witness the 'manifestations.' On two occasions the sounds were heard by Mrs. B. in our company, but were not communicative. The first positive 'manifestations' were heard on the night of the 14th of October, at the house of a gentleman with whom Mrs. Bushnell was boarding. The only intelligible communication received at this time was the following: — '*Your battery is not strong enough.*'

"The account of this demonstration having spread to some extent, there was much speculation in regard to it, and much interest manifested to call out further demonstrations. The supposition that these rappings are 'manifestations' from the spirit-world, employed for the purpose of communicating messages to mortals, having excited great interest in them, and awakened intense curiosity wherever they have been heard, it is not strange that when it was reported they had been heard in Cincinnati, there was a multitude of people anxious to be among the favored who had opportunities to receive communications from friends that had passed through 'the dark valley and shadow of death.'

"On Wednesday evening, October 16th, a number of persons had assembled for the purpose of receiving the benefit of Mrs.

Bushnell's medical examinations, when the mysterious sounds were again heard. Questions were asked, and correct *rapping* replies were given to a number of interrogatories, which, we are informed, could not have been correctly answered by any mortal. The report of this meeting awakened intense curiosity, and on the following evening, a larger company assembled at the same place. A circle was formed, and the *rappings* commenced. Among the gentlemen of this circle were Mr. Samuel Goodin, of Goodin's building, Court-street; G. W. Ball, stove-founder, of Covington, Ky.; Dr. J. P. Gatchell, of the Eclectic Medical College; Mr. Anson Atwood, of Troy, New York; Mr. Augustus Wattles, of Rural, Ohio; Dr. William Owens, of the Eclectic College; Mr. Norton, stove-dealer, on Main-street; and a number of other gentlemen, together with some ladies with whom we were not acquainted.

"The alphabet was called by one of the gentlemen, who understood the *modus operandi* of communication, and the persons in the circle took turns in putting questions. It would not be proper to detail all the questions and answers; many of them were unimportant, and many, though, perhaps, important to the persons interested, are not worthy of public narration. When it came Mr. Goodin's turn to interrogate the spirits, he inquired: — 'Is there a spirit present that will communicate with me?' *Rap.*

"'Can I know what spirit answers?' *Rap.*

"The alphabet was then called, and the following sentence spelled:

"'*I am your own child.*'

"'The youngest?' inquired Mr. Goodin. *No answer.*

"'The second?' *No sound.*

"'The eldest?' *Rap.*

"The alphabet was again called, and the following sentence spelled:

"'*I love you now as well as ever.*'

"'Do you love your mother?' *Rap.*

"'Are you happy?' *Rap.*

"'Are your sisters with you?' *Rap.*

"'Are they happy?' *Rap.*

"'Can I do anything to make you more happy?' *Rap.*

"Again the alphabet was called, and the following sentence spelled:

"'*Be patient, and don't fret about the calomel.*'

"A friend, at this communication, remarked, that 'Mr. Goodin reflected on himself in reference to the child's medical treatment during her sickness.' As if in response to this repeated *raps* were heard.

"Mr. Goodin then inquired, — 'Did you die in consequence of taking calomel?' *Rap.*

"After some further questions and replies of a private character, it came Mr. Augustus Wattles' turn to make interrogatories. He inquired, — 'Is there a spirit present that will converse with me?' *Rap.*

"'Can I know the person?' *Rap.*

"'Will you spell the name?' *No sound.*

"'Will you give the initials?' *Rap.*

"The alphabet was then called, and '*W. W.*' was designated.

"'Is it the spirit of my brother, William Wattles?' *Rap.*

"'Do you intend that I should understand that my brother, William Wattles, is dead?' *Rap.*

"'Did he die in California?' *No sound.*

"'Did he die near California?' *Rap.*

"'Were you well taken care of?' *Rap.*

"'What disease did you die of?' Alphabet called for by several quickly repeated *raps*, and the word 'Diarrhœa' spelled.

"'When shall I hear of this in the common way?' *No sound.*

"'Will it be within one year?' *Rap.*

"'Will it be within nine months?' *Rap.*

"'Will it be within six months?' *No sound.*

"A young man from Kentucky, whose name we did not learn, had now the opportunity of spiritual converse.

"He inquired, 'Will any spirit converse with me?' *Rap.*

"Alphabet called, and the following sentences spelled:

"'*I am your mother. Do not oppose him any more. He will be married.*'

"This communication excited quite a laugh at the young man's expense, and considerable discussion ensued, during which the *rappings* continued, as if to signify that there were more communications to be made. The alphabet was again called, and the following sentence spelled:

"'*It will all come out right.*'

"Some one inquired, 'Is there any meaning to this?'

"Mr. Ball answered, 'Yes, there is great meaning in it to us.'

"Before the company dispersed, some one inquired if all the spirits in the room would *rap* on the table. In response, there was a great number of sounds made at the same moment upon the table, — some loud, some feeble, some sharp, and some prolonged.

"During Friday and Saturday of this week most of the persons who visited Mrs. Bushnell for medical consultation, heard the mysterious sounds, and many astonishing communications were given, if the testimony of respectable persons is to be credited.

"On Saturday evening, October 19th, we had an opportunity of hearing the wonderful demonstrations at the house of J. F. Taylor, the gentleman with whose family we make our home, — a man deeply interested in spiritual investigations, and in whose house there would be no deception allowed, under any circumstances.

"A company had been invited to hear Mrs. B. lecture on Spiritualism. Among the persons present were Major Gano, clerk of the Supreme Court of Cincinnati, Dr. J. S. Garretson, Dr. Wm. Owens, of the Eclectic College, Dr. Childs, of Walnut Hills, Mr. Augustus Wattles, Dr. I. Wilson, Botanic Physician, and many other gentlemen, whose names it is unnecessary to mention, together with a large number of ladies. There were three known clairvoyants in the company. While the lecture was proceeding, the sounds were heard, apparently, under the floor, near the speaker. The clairvoyant spoke of the rappings, calling them

electrical vibrations, and said communications might be had from the spirit-world if a battery was formed. Inquiry was made how a battery could be formed. The reply was, 'By sitting around a table.'

"The lecturer, with two other persons designated, seated themselves together at one corner of the table. Sounds were distinctly heard under the floor, directly beneath these persons. The alphabet was called, and the word *Cornell* was spelled, the sounds occurring as the letters were spoken in repeating the alphabet.

"It was asked if it was the spirit of Mr. Cornell that communicated? *Rap.*

"A few unimportant questions were asked, when a 'manifestation' that startled the entire company was made; suddenly the left arm of one of the ladies at the table was drawn back with great force, as if it had been grasped between the elbow and the shoulder. Several persons undertook to relieve the arm by magnetic passes, but without effect. The inquiry was made — 'Is it the spirit of Mr. *Cornell* that affects the lady?' *Rap.*

"'Will the spirit relieve her?' *No sound;* but suddenly the arm was thrown forward, and the lady was entirely relieved.

"We had been conversing with the lady during the day, in reference to the manifestations, and we remarked to the company that she had observed that she would not believe the *rappings* were by spirits unless some spirits should take hold of her. At this there were several *raps* near the lady, as if to signify that the spirit had made an effort to convince her.

"The question was put — 'Will the spirit take hold of the lady again?' *No sound;* but the lady says that her fingers were pressed together, as if a powerful hand had grasped them. She describes the sensation on her arm as if it had been so vigorously grasped between the elbow and shoulder that she was unable to open or shut her hand.

"We were satisfied at the time that this manifestation was not the effect of magnetism, as generally understood, because the

muscles of the arm were not contracted; the arm was merely drawn, or pulled back, as described.

"When the alphabet was again called for and repeated, the following sentences were spelled:

"'*I will convince you all. Mrs. Bushnell will be magnetized in one minute.*'

"Several watches were immediately on the table. Mrs. Bushnell said she would not be magnetized, and was ridiculing the communication, when, at the instant the minute expired, with a shock as if a dozen electric batteries had operated upon her, her eyes closed, and she became rigid. In another minute, with another shock, her eyes opened, and the rigidity passed off instantly.

"Again the alphabet was called for, and the following sentence spelled — '*Go home.*'

"After some general conversation, and much speculation on the demonstrations of the evening, the company dispersed — many expressing themselves astonished, others *posed*, and some convinced that spirits do communicate with mortals. On this occasion the sounds could not have been produced, we are satisfied, by any sort of collusion among any of the company. If any were deceived, all were. The manifestations purported to be from only one spirit, that of John P. Cornell, a lawyer of some distinction, in Cincinnati, who died of cholera in the summer of 1849.

"In this life, Mr. Cornell had carefully and extensively made clairvoyant investigations; he was a firm believer in, and public advocate of, the doctrine that spiritual manifestations can be made through clairvoyants, and had been identified with a society organized for the purpose of both physical and spiritual investigations, through clairvoyance. It is consistent, then, that on the occasion referred to, as there were several persons in the company who had been closely identified with him in this world, that his spirit should take advantage of circumstances and make astounding demonstrations.

"On Monday afternoon, October 21st, in company with Mrs. Bushnell, the clairvoyant, and our 'better half,' we paid a visit

to the family of a well-known, eloquent temperance advocate, residing several miles from the city. At the request of the gentleman, Mrs. Bushnell was thrown into the clairvoyant state, under our influence. She examined his head, giving, as far as we know his character, a very correct estimate. She was then requested to describe a lady, whose initials only were given. Neither Mrs. Bushnell, nor ourself, had ever heard *of*, or *about*, her.

"According to the gentleman's acknowledgment she described the lady and her husband, and the lady's ailments perfectly. While Mrs. Bushnell was making this examination she began to speak of spiritual matters, as she is always prone to do in her clairvoyant state, and remarked that she saw a spirit which seemed to be the attendant angel of the household. She gave a description of this spirit, which answered the description of the gentleman's first wife, some three or four years deceased, and stated that this spirit wished to communicate with the family.

"'Why,' said Mrs. Bushnell, 'she is magnetizing Mrs. ——.'

"The lady mentioned had been for several minutes much agitated, and was evidently under magnetic influence, and continued so for nearly half an hour.

"At the supper-table, Mrs. Bushnell and this lady sat directly opposite each other. The mysterious rappings were heard under the table, very distinctly. A series of questions and *rapping* replies followed.

"'Will the spirit communicate?' *Rap.*

"'Shall the alphabet be called?' *Rap.*

"We repeated the letters of the alphabet, and the following sentence was spelled:

"'*I am your friend, Louisa.*'

"We inquired of the gentleman, who, he supposed, was meant; and he answered that Louisa was the Christian name of his first wife. No one present but the members of the family was aware of this fact. They were all much astonished at the demonstration, and several were considerably alarmed.

"The question was put — 'Are there any more communications to be made?' *Rap.*

"The letters of the alphabet were repeated, and the following sentences spelled:

"'*I am happy — I am with you here often.*'

"The astonishment of the family was increased, and there was a general conversation in relation to the mysterious sounds, much of which was of a sceptical character, when again the *raps* were heard.

"'Shall the alphabet be called?' said one of the company. *Rap.*

"The following sentence was spelled:

"'*Will you be satisfied?*'

"No sounds were heard, after the communication of this sentence, until the ladies had retired from the supper-room and were gathered in the parlor. Here repeated raps were distinctly heard, but it was growing late, we had six miles to drive, and business to attend to in the city, and were obliged to forego the pleasure of further spiritual intercourse.

"This was treating the spiritual communicants quite cavalierly, but our circumstances were such it could not justifiably have been avoided.

"On Tuesday and Wednesday, the rappings were heard frequently at the house where Mrs. Bushnell was stopping, and a large number of persons held conversations with the *rappers.* On Wednesday evening, Mrs. Bushnell met a select circle at the house of Professor J. R. Buchanan, and communications were received by *raps* from the father of Dr. Buchanan, many years deceased, and from Dr. T. V. Morrow, a few months deceased, formerly Dean of the Eclectic Medical College.

"Circles were subsequently formed in various parts of the city, for the purpose of calling out the 'manifestations,' but no communications were received.

"On Saturday, October 26th, Mrs. Bushnell left Cincinnati, on a visit to her home, in the western part of New York, and did not

return for nearly four weeks. During her absence there were no *rapping* 'manifestations' with which communication was had, although many clairvoyant investigations of deep interest were made, by means of several excellent subjects.

"The substance of the history we have thus far detailed was published, from day to day, in the *Daily Times;* it excited great curiosity, and occasioned a great deal of speculation.

"It is the nature of the subject. Direct communication with the spirit-world is a matter on which there is so much scepticism — a matter so astonishing, judged by the common teachings on the subject, that it would be strange if articles detailing correspondence with spirits did not 'make talk.' Some persons treated the *rappings* with scorn; some as a successful *humbug*-wonder; some denounced all who had any communication with them as villains; and some appeared to think that lying spirits *do* communicate, and very piously affirmed that it is prophesied that in 'these latter days' there shall be 'signs and wonders,' which, if it were possible, would deceive the 'very *elect*.' Many thought that Cincinnati had just been visited by a grand *humbug* which had 'run out' at the eastern cities. A few were disposed to treat the mysterious matter candidly, and honestly investigate it. The press of the city generally ridiculed the whole affair, and two or three papers denounced the *rappings* as a decided and outrageous humbug. They were alluded to in several sermons, but were only spoken of directly from an orthodox pulpit on one occasion.

"On Sabbath evening, November 3d, Rev. C. B. Boynton, of the Vine-street Congregational church, lectured on spiritualism, with reference to the 'manifestations.' He considered them *demonstrations* literally. He traced through history many remarkable manifestations, which he ascribed to the same influences as those producing the '*rappings*.' He expressed an opinion that the astrologers and magicians of olden time received their power of magic and divination from spirits — that is to say, wicked spirits;

and the influences of the present day he judged to be from the same source.

"Legions of demons encompass, in his opinion, the atmosphere about us, and have the power to make 'manifestations' through man. They might enter man and personify other spirits — spirits of friends deceased, or of prophets or apostles. The Prince of Darkness had the power of the air; and if a spirit should speak to him (Mr. B.), representing itself as the ethereal essence of his dearest departed friend, discrediting, in any particular, the doctrines and prophecies of the Bible, *as now understood*, he should believe it a lying spirit, assuming shapes that did not belong to it for evil purposes. We must try the spirits by the teachings of Christ and his apostles.

"If, from the demonstrations now being made, a sect of spiritualists should grow up that discredited established theology, and that sect should 'increase and multiply,' he should consider that the period was commencing, which he conceived to be foretold in the Bible, when the Prince of Darkness shall for a time have dominion, and the wicked shall triumph, prior to the winding up of terrestrial affairs, when the saints shall prevail, and Christ shall come in the clouds with his holy angels to judge the world.

"A short time subsequent to this discourse, Professor Locke, of Cincinnati, in a lecture, introductory to a course before the Ohio Medical College, took occasion, as many people supposed, to expose the 'knocking humbug,' scientifically. The learned doctor declared the whole thing a well-played, juggling scheme, and to his own satisfaction described how magnets and wires might be so disposed upon the person of a woman that she could produce mysterious sounds at pleasure. The lecture was a great relief to a certain class of minds; and, as it did them no harm to be relieved, we are not sorry they found a doctor who could prescribe for their *peculiar* ailments.

No further public attention was called to the 'Knockings,' except by us in the *Daily Times*, until about the middle of December, when Professor Gatchell, of the Eclectic College, delivered

two lectures at the Hall of the Institute. He gave a sketch of spiritual manifestations in various ages of the world, and presented his views upon their philosophy.

"On Sabbath evening, December 22d, Rev. J. P. Stuart, of the New Jerusalem Society (Swedenborgian), announced a course of lectures on 'the communications between men and spiritual beings in another sphere.' His introductory was reported in full, by J. D. Taylor, editor of the *Daily Times*.

"He commenced by referring to early biblical history for the first facts bearing on the subject. At the earliest period, angels and spirits appeared to men, and always excited fear and apprehension. The presence of a spirit was a token of evil — voices speaking from the invisible world — visions of spiritual things filled the minds even of good men with calamitous forebodings, while the evil would be utterly overwhelmed. Belshazzar, while drinking wine from the sacred vessels brought from Jerusalem, with his wives and concubines, and praising their gods, witnessed the handwriting on the wall and trembled. When the Lord appeared to Adam in the garden, he was afraid. The usual commencement of the message of the angel of the Lord was, 'Fear not.' The word of the Lord came unto Abraham in a vision, saying, 'Fear not, I am thy shield,' &c. The angel of the Lord called to Hagar, and said unto her, 'Fear not, for the Lord hath heard the voice of the lad,' &c. The Lord appeared to Isaac and said, 'Fear not, for I am with thee,' &c. Moses said, 'Fear not, for God has come nigh to prove you,' &c. The angel of the Lord appeared to Gideon and said, 'Peace be with thee; fear not, thou shalt not die,' &c. Gabriel appeared to Mary to make the annunciation, and said to her, 'Fear not, for thou hast found favor with God,' &c. Other passages, from the New Testament, were quoted, to prove the fact, as announced, that fear was common on the occasion of these communications. John of Patmos was so addressed: 'Fear not, I am the first and the last,' &c. Within the last hundred years this fear had vanished; the visit of a spirit had now no terrors to any one; it disturbed neither men, women,

nor children. All this was well; it showed at least that we are not afraid. Whoever he is that speaks from the 'night-side of nature,' we are not afraid of his voice. Angel, spirit, or demon, let him speak, we neither hide our eyes, nor shudder at his presence; on the contrary, we seek them out — we say, give us the proof of their presence — let us hear their oracles, if they are divine, let us worship and adore — if they are miraculous, let us adore them — if magical or mesmeric, let us see them — if galvanic or electrical, let us demonstrate them.

"The ambition of bold adventure in spiritual things characterized the spiritual philosophers and their attendant disciples at the present day. The lecturer acknowledged the universal presence of the spiritual world, and declared his belief that communication with that world was neither impossible nor improbable. The apparitions of angels and spirits, the visions of prophets and apostles, and the coming of our Lord, were proofs of this communication, and they were continued when any good and useful end might be gained by them.

"The attention called to the 'manifestations,' by Mr. Stuart's lectures, led to a discussion at the Franklin rooms, corner of Vine and Centre streets. A large number of persons attended, showing that, with however much ridicule people may treat these subjects, they have deep interest in all that pertains to them.

"The speakers on this occasion were Mr. J. B. Burns, phonographic teacher, and ourself, on the affirmative; D. Reddington, homœopathic physician, and Isaac Straub, machinist, on the negative. The discussion was not one that elicited any new views. It was continued for several successive Sunday evenings with interest, and we presume with profit. Mr. Stuart's lectures were all listened to with eager attention by very large audiences.

"The details of no 'manifestations' had been made public for some time, and the wise and witty were having rare sport at the expense of the 'humbug that had exploded.' Meantime, Mrs. Bushnell returned to the city. A few days after her arrival, sounds were heard in the house where she was stopping, but no communications were had, till one afternoon, Mr. James Goodin,

before referred to, and Dr. A. Curtis, of the Botanical Medical College, called upon her. Sounds were heard near the doctor's chair. He inquired —

"'Is there a spirit present that will communicate with me?' *Rap.*

"The alphabet was called for by repeated sounds, and at the calling over of the letters, such were designated by *raps* as spelled the following words: 'It is your wife, H. A. C. You know you thought I felt hard sometimes. I did not intend any harm. I am happy now, and with you. I am your guardian angel. I have been with you all the time. Good evening.'

"Mr. Goodin then inquired —

"'Will any spirit communicate with me?' *Rap.*

"The following communication was received by the usual method:

"'It is your daughter, Anna G——. I love my dear father. You are most happy with me around the table. I answer for all our family. I am your guardian angel.'

"On the evening following that on which these 'manifestations' were given, another party assembled at the same place. A young lady inquired if any spirit would communicate with her. Distinct *raps* were given, and the following communication made:

"'Be content at your present home. I am with you often. It is my pleasure to be with you. Be certain, my sister, we are all happy here. I have done as I agreed.'

"On the announcement of the last sentence the young lady was startled, and she then told the company that she had been in Rochester with her sister when rapping 'manifestations' were being made in the family of Mrs. Fish. They did not believe them to be spiritual 'manifestations;' and when they parted they mutually agreed that whichever died first should visit the other in spirit, and make raps, if it were possible. The sister went to Wisconsin, and died. She had come to her sister, in Ohio, in spirit, and fulfilled the promise made in the flesh.

"Mr. Norton, before spoken of, was one of the circle. He

inquired if any spirit would communicate with him? *Rap.* The following communication was received:

"'I am your brother, David. My mission is to convince you that I exist in spirit. Never make a public demonstration of it, but publish the communications made in private circles. My dear brother, you may consider yourself a favored person, as, with a proper medium, you can communicate with me and others. Use no more means to settle my affairs. All is done that can be done. I am satisfied with the course you adopted, and with the manner my business was closed by George. Be happy and contented — I am with you always. Good-evening.'

"Other raps were now heard. The alphabet was called, and the following communication given to the same gentleman:

"'I am your father. I am here to communicate with you and the rest of the folks, but I am not here often — my care is for your brother, Washington. No more to-night.'

"These communications were exceedingly gratifying to this gentleman. He had been his brother's administrator. His own business had obliged him to give the settlement into a younger brother's hands. It was truly gratifying to learn that all had been arranged satisfactorily.

"Other communications were had, but they were not of a character proper for publication. At a meeting of a circle, subsequent to both the above mentioned, a communication was made to a gentleman of our city, which was exceedingly important to him and friends.

"As the particulars of these spiritual interviews became known the interest in them deepened, and we began to hear of demonstrations in various quarters of the city. Great curiosity was manifested by believers and unbelievers to meet Mrs. Bushnell, and hear the 'mysterious noises;' but, as yet, only a small portion of the curious in Cincinnati have been among the privileged.

"About the first of December we heard of 'rappings' in several portions of the city. A Miss B——, on Cutter-street, had frequently heard them, but had never communicated with them,

and her family considered them forerunners of calamity. A Miss M—— had heard the sounds repeatedly before Mrs. Bushnell visited the city. A Miss H—— had often heard them. They were first manifested about two years ago. They alarmed her father and mother. They endeavored to ascertain the cause, but without success, and could never understand them until they heard of the 'Rochester Knockings.' Dr. Wm. Owens, of the Eclectic Medical College, had frequently heard them, and had occasionally received answers to mental questions from the spirit of Dr. Morrow. During the last week of November several persons held communication with the sounds, while consulting Mrs. Bushnell for medical purposes. Prof. B. F. Hill received, by means of *raps*, what he considers a very important communication in reference to medical science. A lady, whose husband had been some months deceased, received a communication from him, in reference to the settlement of business, and the deception of certain persons who were administering his estate, which has proved of great importance to her. A young man of this city informs us that his sister, a Miss J——, who died a few months since, told her family on her death-bed, that if the 'rappings' were not a delusion she would communicate with them. To her brother-in-law she said, 'I will visit you when I leave the body, if I can, and make a sound that you will recognize.'

"A few weeks ago, a sister of this lady had an opportunity to hear the *raps*, and she received communications which convinced her that her sister, who had departed from this sphere, had fulfilled her promise. The brother-in-law has heard sounds for which he cannot account. We give this as told us, in good faith, by a respectable and responsible man — one who would not be likely to jest about the return of a departed sister, to his family, in such a manner that her presence was believed.

"Dr. Silsbee, a gentleman of Cincinnati, who is much interested in the New-Light Philosophy, was, on one occasion, making clairvoyant examinations, in company with a friend, named Allen, when rapping communications were given him, purporting to come

from his father. The character of the communications was such that he endeavored, subsequently, on several occasions, to get into a circle through which the sounds could be made.

"He was, one afternoon, sitting in his office, in company with his brother, a lad about fourteen years of age, when he heard the sounds distinctly. He called his brother to the table at which he was writing, when the 'noises' were manifested loudly. He requested that, if it were a spirit manifesting, it would make two *raps*. The sounds came so positively that he felt the vibration. He inquired if his brother was a medium, and if he would receive 'manifestations' through him, and was answered by *raps* affirmatory; after which he could call out no more sounds.

"These 'manifestations' induced the doctor to bring his brother into the company of a clairvoyant. He was told that the lad had often had 'manifestations' — that he had heard sounds and seen lights, and that he was under the influence of the spirit of a lady who, in this sphere, had been an intimate friend of his family. The lad verified the clairvoyant's impressions by stating that he had often seen lights and heard what were called *rappings*.

"The names and references of all the persons alluded to in these communications are not given, because it would be improper to connect them or their affairs more intimately with the matter. We have the statements from reliable sources, or we should not refer to them; and only do so at all to show that the 'manifestations' have not been confined to a particular individual in all respects.

"On account of the ridicule thrown upon all who were in any way identified with the 'rapping manifestations,' and because the curiosity they excited brought so many persons to her house, that her business — making medical examinations — was materially interfered with, Mrs. Bushnell decided, positively, about the first of December, that she would, under no circumstances, place herself in a circle for the purpose of receiving the 'manifesta-

tions.' With a few exceptions, of a private nature, she has maintained her position."

From this time the manifestations continued to spread in Cincinnati, accompanied by all the various phenomena occurring in other places. There is scarcely a place in the whole country where the manifestations and believers in spiritualism have increased with greater rapidity. I do not think any city of equal size contains a greater number of spiritualists.

In the summer following Mrs. Bushnell's visit the Fox family visited Cincinnati, and during their stay all the various and marked phenomena that have attended them elsewhere were observed. They were visited by hundreds of curious and candid inquirers, who were astonished at the power of the manifestations. A writer in one of their city papers gives the following account of the progress of the cause in that vicinity.

"In the private arteries of our city, coursing with steady but powerful motion, there is an influence which has assumed a most wonderful magnitude. The public mind discusses commercial policies, or agitates questions of the church militant, and heeds not this secret movement. The press has been dumb, save in ridicule, and the great mass of the people little dream of the terrific social and moral volcanic eruption which will necessarily occur, ere long, from causes now fringing the combustible mental world. But a few years ago the subject of spiritual rappings was introduced into Cincinnati, and although it met with a cold reception, yet it made a deep impression on a few minds, and the seed has produced an immense yield. The human constitution seems prone to searching after the hidden truths of nature, and that, together with the marvellous curiosity connected with the rappings, has invested the investigation of the phenomena with a never-ceasing anxiety.

"For some time after the introduction of the matter here, and when Coggshall's 'History of the Rappings in Cincinnati' was published, there were but few believers in the spiritual theory

and when Burr 'showed up the humbug,' many persons supposed that it was exploded. But the popular mind was not satisfied, and a yet greater number commenced inquiries. For a long time the Fox girls were the only persons here in whose presence the raps could be heard. Soon, however, mediums began to be developed in different portions of the city, and spiritual investigations increased. Men and women became insane, but that, instead of allaying the excitement, had quite the contrary effect. People were anxious to learn what this great cause was which had the effect to unbalance mind; and thousands, putting full confidence in their own mental stability, sought the witnessing of spiritual experiments.

"The effect of this agitation has been most astonishing. We have taken careful notes of the present state of the movement, and the facts almost stagger belief. It has been quite impossible for us to obtain full information, for many circles we found embosomed in private limits, and learned of their existence by accident only, and many, we have reason to suppose, are of this class. Our list, however, reaches fifty-nine organized circles, and these figures may, at least, be doubled, in arriving at the true number. This however, does not include, perhaps, hundreds of circles which are held occasionally, or by those who have just commenced experimenting. The number of mediums, whose names we could obtain, is three hundred and ten, which does not include those partially developed. If this class were added, from information we have obtained, the number of mediums in Cincinnati would not be less than *twelve hundred.*

"The circles are not confined to any particular class of society, but are formed on every street and square of the city. No particular religious sect is more interested than another, but Christians, Jews and Infidels, are earnest in their inquiries. The number of investigators here can be estimated only by *tens of thousands.*

"So great has been the demand for the publications touching this subject, that one book concern, that of F. Bly, the blind phrenologist, has confined its business almost entirely to this class of

books. The number which has been written, referring directly to the spiritual phenomena, is thirty-five, and near a dozen newspapers and periodicals, devoted to the investigation of the subject, are issued in different parts of the Union, all of which find many eager purchasers in our city.

"In the progress of this movement, the old system of communicating by raps has been superseded by yet stranger processes. In the beginning of the excitement it took a half hour to obtain anything like a complete sentence by the raps; but then it was said that, in a few years, mediums would be developed who would talk and write under spiritual influence, and that period, it is alleged, has arrived. The raps are seldom heard, but physical demonstrations are frequently witnessed, which seem to indicate that the power of making noises and moving matter has not been abandoned. Numerous unquestionably authenticated occurrences of this character have recently taken place, which have had a tendency to draw several distinguished minds within the arena of spiritual investigation. We will mention a few of the most boldly defined cases of this class.

"At a private circle in the western part of the city the editor of a morning paper was carried, together with a table upon which he sat, several times across the room, without there being any visible moving cause.

"A lady, residing on Seventh-street, whose daughter — a young lady — was sick with fever, called upon the spirits to cure her child, and desired that, to fully convince her of their power, the fever should leave one side at a time. The lady affirms that the right side of her daughter's face became pale and cold, while the left was burning with a raging fever; but, after a few moments, it also was relieved.

"An ex-judge, on Fourth-street, who had been ridiculing his wife for convening circles at their house, was prevailed on one evening to remain in the circle. He had always considered the matter too foolish to investigate, and vauntingly remarked, during the evening, that if spirit-beings existed, he would like to see them try their power on the centre-table, around which the party were

sitting. No sooner had the expression escaped his lips, than the top of the table was twisted from the column and rolled across the floor.

"This gentleman, in a recent private note from Washington city, where he is now visiting, says that this subject is agitating our representatives. He writes of a circle, which he attended the evening previous, where Senator Chase and Thomas Corwin were present, and also Preston King, of New York, which latter gentleman was the medium.

"But to the communications. These are now generally made by the medium's arm being *spiritually magnetized*, and becoming obedient to spiritual direction of writing, or in pointing out letters on a large alphabet; or, as is more frequently the case, after a half-hour's quiet sitting in a circle of eight or a dozen persons, who form a battery by uniting their hands, the medium is magnetized, and, it is affirmed, taken possession of by the spirits, who use her organs of speech in talking to the company. These speeches are frequently of a most extraordinary character, representing, as they do, to come from the spirits of great men who have passed from earth. A blue-eyed girl of seventeen, for instance, rises, and, in a vigorous manner, discusses politics or religion with the logic of Henry Clay, or the pathos of James H. Perkins. A man of forty speaks for John Wesley and Fourier, using accurately the manner of speech of those persons. Or, perhaps, the medium assumes the character of a near relative of some one in the circle, and, although having been dead a great while, yet, by a familiar gesture, or may be an old by-word sentence, the idea of the loved one is brought vividly to mind.

"The 'revelations' through the mediums vary somewhat, yet all are of a radical character. They teach the overthrow of existing church organizations, and say that vital changes must be made in the social and commercial world. The belief in the spiritual agency of these teachings being quite general, and becoming more so every day, the effect will be, as we previously stated, to form a great radical party, which will develop itself ere-long, and astonish the world by its strength."

CHAPTER XIV.

MANIFESTATIONS IN BUFFALO, N. Y. — THE EXPOSÉ OF THE UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS — COUNTER STATEMENTS — MRS. FISH'S LETTER — DR. LEE TO THE TRIBUNE, AND THE EDITOR'S REMARKS — EFFECTS OF THE EXPOSÉ.

On several accounts Buffalo is one of the most noted places in the history of the early manifestations. It has not, so far as I have been able to learn, been remarkable for the number of its local media or manifestations; but it was the starting-point of a theory in explanation of the sounds that, for a time, was quite popular among the opponents of the spiritual hypothesis and those who had never given it a fair investigation. I allude to the knee-joint theory, which was started by three learned professors of the University of Buffalo; and as the fame of that institution deserves to be perpetuated for having three such remarkably *scientific* professors connected with it, as well as the importance that was attached to it, I give the whole story, as it originated from themselves and their friends. It took place while the Fox family, or Mrs. Fish and Margaretta, were at the Phelps House in that city, in the month of February, 1851, and after they had received many visitors, and many astonishing accounts had been published. The professors ranked, one as professor of Physiology, one of Materia Medica and one of the Principles and Practice of Medicine and Clinical Medicine. I wish to give them the full credit of all their titles, and put them fairly on record.

The first announcement of this scientific "exposé" appeared in the *Buffalo Commercial Advertiser* on the 18th of February, 1851, and reads as follows:

"TO THE EDITOR OF THE COMMERCIAL ADVERTISER.

"Curiosity having led us to visit the room at the Phelps House in which two females from Rochester (Mrs. Fish and Miss Fox) profess to exhibit *striking* manifestations of the spiritual world, by means of which communion may be held with deceased friends, &c., and having arrived at a physiological explanation of the phenomena, the correctness of which has been demonstrated in an instance which has since fallen under our observation, we have felt that a public statement is called for, which may, perhaps, serve to prevent a further waste of time, money and credulity (to say nothing of sentiment and philosophy), in connection with this, so long successful imposition.

"The explanation is reached, almost by a logical necessity, on the application of a method of reasoning much resorted to in the diagnosis of diseases, namely, *the reasoning by exclusion.* It was reached by this method prior to the demonstration which has subsequently occurred.

"It is to be assumed, first, that the manifestations are not to be regarded as spiritual, provided they can be physically or physiologically accounted for. Immaterial agencies are not to be invoked until material agencies fail. We are thus to *exclude* spiritual causation in this stage of the investigation.

"Next, it is taken for granted that the *rappings* are not produced by artificial contrivances about the persons of the females, which may be concealed by the dress. This hypothesis is excluded because it is understood that the females have been repeatedly and carefully examined by lady committees.

"It is obvious that the rappings are not caused by machinery attached to tables, doors, &c., for they are heard in different rooms, and in different parts of the same room, in which the females are present, but always *near* the spot where the females are stationed. This mechanical hypothesis is then to be *excluded.*

"So much for *negative* evidence; and now for what *positively* relates to the subject.

"On carefully observing the countenances of the two females, it was evident that the sounds were due to the agency of the younger sister, and that they involved an effort of the will. She evidently attempted to conceal any indications of voluntary effort; but in this she did not succeed; a voluntary effort was manifested, and it was plain that it could not be continued very long without fatigue.

"Assuming, then, this positive fact, the inquiry arises, how can the will be exerted to produce sounds (rappings) without obvious movements of the body? The voluntary muscles are the only organs (save those which belong to the mind itself) over which volition can exercise any direct control. But the contractions of the muscles do not, in the muscles themselves, occasion obvious sounds. The muscles, therefore, to develop audible vibrations, must act upon parts with which they are connected. Now, it was sufficiently clear that the rappings were not *vocal* sounds; these could not be produced without movements of the respiratory muscles, which would at once lead to detection. Hence, *excluding* vocal sounds, the only *possible* source of the noises in question, produced, as we have seen they must be, by voluntary muscular contractions, is in one or more of the movable articulations of the skeleton. From the anatomical construction of the voluntary muscles, this explanation remains as the only alternative.

"By an analysis, prosecuted in this manner, we arrive at the conviction that the *rappings*, assuming that they are not spiritual, are produced by the action of the will, through voluntary muscles, on the joints.

"Various facts may be cited to show that the motion of the joints, under certain circumstances, is adequate to produce the phenomena of the *rappings;* but we need not now refer to these. By a curious coïncidence, after arriving at the above conclusion respecting the source of the sounds, an instance has fallen under our observation, which demonstrates the fact that noises precisely identical with the *spiritual rappings* may be produced in the *knee joints.*

"A highly respectable lady of this city possesses the ability of developing sounds similar, both in character and degree, to those professedly elicited, by the Rochester impostors, from the spirit-world. We have witnessed the production of the sounds by the lady referred to, and have been permitted to examine the mechanism by which they are produced. *Without entering at this time into a very minute anatomical and physiological explanation, it is sufficient to state that the muscles inserted into the upper and inner side of the large bone of the leg (the tibia) near the knee joint, are brought into action so as to move the upper surface of the bone just named laterally upon the lower surface of the thigh-bone (the femur), giving rise, in fact, to a partial lateral dislocation.** This is effected by an act of the will, without any obvious movement of the limb, occasioning a loud noise, and the return of the bone to its place is attended by a second sound. Most of the Rochester rappings are also double. It is practicable, however, to produce a single sound by moving the bone out of place with the requisite quickness and force, and allowing it to slide slowly back, in which case it is noiseless.

"The visible vibrations of articles in the room, situated near the operator, occur, if the limb, or any portion of the body, is in contact with them at the time the sounds are produced. The force of the semi-dislocation of the bone is sufficient to occasion distinct jarring of the doors, tables, &c., if in contact. The intensity of

* This article was published in the "Buffalo Medical Journal," for March, 1851, with a note saying that the *editor* had *taken the liberty* to "correct an error in the account of the displacement of the joint which produces the sounds." That correction was of the sentence we have italicized, and the editorial correction reads as follows: "Without entering, at this time, into minute anatomical and physiological explanation, it is sufficient to state that, *owing to relaxation of the ligaments of the knee joint, by means of muscular action and pressure of the lower extremity against a point of resistance, the large bone of the leg* (the tibia) is moved laterally upon the lower surface of the thigh bone (the femur), giving rise, in fact, to partial lateral dislocation." By comparing the portion italicized in this note especially, it will be seen that the doctors "disagreed," very materially, making, in fact, two different statements.

the sound may be varied in proportion to the force of the muscular contractions, and this will render the apparent source of the rappings more or less distinct.

"We have witnessed repetitions of experiments, in the case just referred to, sufficient to exhibit to us all the phenomena of the sounds belonging to the Rochester rappings, and, without further explanations at this time, we append our names in testimony of the facts contained in the foregoing hastily-penned exposition.

AUSTIN FLINT, M. D., } *University*
CHARLES A. LEE, M. D., } *of*
C. B. COVENTRY, M. D., } *Buffalo.*

"Feb. 17th, 1851."

On the appearance of this manifesto, the ladies implicated caused the following card to be published in all the daily papers of the next day:

"TO DOCTORS FLINT, COVENTRY AND LEE.

"GENTS: We observe, by a communication in the *Commercial Advertiser*, that you have recently made an examination of a 'highly respectable lady of this city,' by which you have discovered the secret of the 'Rochester impostors.' As we do not feel willing to rest under the imputation of being impostors, we are very willing to undergo a proper and decent examination, provided we can select three male and three female friends who shall be present on the occasion.

"We can assure the public that there is no one more anxious than ourselves to discover the origin of these mysterious manifestations. If they can be explained on 'anatomical' and 'physiological' principles, it is due to the world that the investigation be made, and that the 'humbug' be exposed. As there seems to be much interest manifested by the public on that subject, we would suggest that as early an investigation as is convenient would be acceptable to the undersigned. ANN L. FISH.

MARGARETTA FOX."

The learned professors, being thus challenged, could do no less than accept, and a meeting was arranged, which took place at the Phelps House. Several experiments were tried, and the result published in all the leading papers. We make the following extracts from the report:

"The two females were seated upon two chairs placed near together, their heels resting on cushions, their lower limbs extended, with the toes elevated and the feet separated from each other. The object of this experiment was to secure a position in which the ligaments of the knee joint should be made tense, and no opportunity offered to make a pressure with the foot. We were pretty well satisfied that the displacement of the bones requisite for the sounds could not be effected, unless a fulcrum were obtained by resting one foot upon the other, or on some resisting body. The company waited half an hour, but no sounds were heard in this position.

"The position of the younger sister was then changed to a sitting posture, with lower limbs extended on the sofa, the elder sister sitting, in the customary way, at the other extremity of the sofa. The 'spirits' did not choose to signify their presence under these circumstances, although repeatedly requested so to do. The latter experiment went to confirm the belief that the younger sister alone produced the *rapping*. These experiments were continued until the females themselves admitted that it was useless to continue any longer at that time, with any expectation of *manifestations* being made.

"In resuming the usual position on the sofa, the feet resting on the floor, the *knockings* soon began to be heard. It was then suggested that some other experiment be made. This was assented to, notwithstanding the first was, to our minds, amply conclusive. The experiment selected was, that the knees of the two females be firmly grasped, with the hands so applied that any lateral movement of the bones would be perceptible to the touch. The pressure was made through the dress. It was not expected to

prevent the sounds, but to ascertain if they proceeded from the knee joint. It is obvious that this experiment was far less demonstrative to an observer than the first, because, if the bones were distinctly felt to move, the only evidence of this fact would be the testimony of those whose hands were in contact with them. The hands were kept in apposition for several minutes at a time, and the experiments repeated frequently, for the course of an hour or more, with negative results; that is to say, there were plenty of *raps* when the knees were not held, and none when the hands were applied, save once; as the pressure was intentionally somewhat relaxed (Dr. Lee being the holder), two or three faint single *raps* were heard, and Dr. Lee immediately averred that the motion of the bone was plainly perceptible to him. The experiment of seizing the knees as quickly as possible, when the knockings first commenced, was tried several times, but always with the effect of putting an immediate *quietus* upon the *demonstrations*.

"The proposition to bandage the knees was discussed. The experiment was objected to, on the part of the friends of the females, unless we would concede that it should be an exclusive test experiment. We were not prepared with appliances to render the limb immovable, and therefore declined to have it considered such a test. This was the experiment anticipated, and one which, we presume, the females thought would end in their triumph. A bandage applied above and below the patella, admitting of flexion of the limb, will probably prevent the displacement, as we have but little doubt had been ascertained by the Rochester females before an examination was invited. Should it become necessary to repeat experiments, in other places, in furtherance of the explosion of the imposition, we would suggest that the bandage be not relied upon. * * * * Had our experiments, which were first directed to this joint, failed, we should have proceeded to interrogate, experimentally, other articulations. But the conclusion seemed clear that the *Rochester knockings* emanate from the knee joint."

The professors then state that they have *heard* of several cases of knee-joint, ankle-joint, toe-joint, hip-joint and finger-joint cracking to produce these sounds, but have not had time or opportunity to examine any of them, and they very sagely add: "The exposure of the imposition opens a new and curious field of physiological inquiry, and we would commend the subject to those who have leisure and facilities for prosecuting it. *Articular* as well as *articulated* sounds seem to claim an investigation which they have not heretofore received. Had the facts which the detection of this trick developed been contained in any anatomical or physiological treatise, the progress of the deception would have been arrested long ago. * * * * * * That sounds so loud should originate in the way we have ascertained that they are produced would surprise even the medical listener, and perhaps seem almost incredible. It is readily conceivable how, to other than medical listeners, the phenomena should appear not only inexplicable, but in a high degree mysterious. The remark was made by many, after the explanation was published, that it required almost as much stretch of imagination to believe that such sounds could be produced in joints, as that they involved a supernatural agency. The anatomical formation of the knee joint is evidently the most favorable to the production of loud sounds by displacement. The broad articular surfaces offer considerable space for lateral motion, provided the ligaments are sufficiently relaxed, and the requisite motor force is properly applied. The relative shortness of the outer condyl of the femur favors the outward displacement, and true dislocation in this direction would be likely to occur, were it not for the numerous strong ligaments which render this the strongest articulation in the body. * * The displacement occasioning the *knockings* is sufficient to remove the ridge of bone which divides the two articular surfaces of the upper extremity of the tibia, from its situation in the sulcus between the condyls of the femur, and to carry it, more or less, upon the surface of the outer condyl. This movement gives rise to the first sound; and the return of the bone to its place causes

the second sound, which, in the *Rochester knockings*, generally follows quickly on the first. *We are unable to explain fully the precise mechanism by which the displacement is effected.* In the case of the lady of this city, who reproduces the *spiritual rappings*, the bone slips outward with very slight voluntary effort, and *it is not easy*, from her own account, or by manual exploration, to determine the particular muscles that are brought to bear on this joint. In this case the displacement occasionally occurs in bending the limb, when no effort is made to produce it; but under these circumstances it is not generally attended with much noise. * * * The lady just referred to is now able to produce the sounds in one knee only. In early life she had this power in both knees. From the number and volume of sounds produced, it is evident that both the knees of the Rochester rappers are endowed with sonorous powers. *It might be supposed that the frequent repetitions of these displacements would produce, after a time, irritation and disease within the joint.* In the case of the lady of this city *they are followed by some soreness;* but in early life, when she was in the habit of practising them daily, more or less, she *experienced no pain*, nor any unpleasant consequences, and she was then able to develop louder sounds than she can at present."

The learned professors then proceed to account for the sounds being heard in different places about the room, and say that "in the first place the sounds do not really come from a distance. It may seem that this is so, but it is a delusion arising from not appreciating correctly some of the laws of acoustics." The whole is summed up to be that the sounds never appear to be at any point unless the foot of the medium is in contact, conducting it to that point, or by imitation of distance in the difference of intonation or loudness of the sounds.

I have given all the principal arguments of the Buffalo professors, as I wish them to be committed to impartial history on their own merits, that all the glory of their discovery may rest upon the legitimate authors. Dr. Lee wrote an account of the "dis-

covery" for the New York *Tribune*, to which the sagacious and candid editor of that paper appended a note, in which he says: "The doctors, as has already appeared in our columns, commenced with the assumption that the origin of the 'rapping' sounds *must* be physical, and their primary cause the volition of the ladies aforesaid — in short, that these ladies were 'the Rochester impostors.' They appear, therefore, in the above statement, as the prosecutors of an impeachment, and ought to have selected other persons as judges and reporters of the trial. Their statements may be ever so true, without carrying with them the force which would have properly belonged to them had others been the prosecutors, and they been called in as the umpires. It is quite probable that we shall have another version of the matter."

The opinion of the professors was quoted very extensively, and the press very generally put it down as the "grand finale of the Rochester knockings." It will be noticed by the attentive reader that there are some great defects, not only in the science, but in the logic of the trio, and the whole process of "reasoning by way of exclusion" is well illustrated by the old anecdote of the sportsman who sold a dog as a good hunter of coons, and had him returned by the purchaser, who declared that he would not hunt coons at all. "Now," said the former owner, "that does beat all. I tried him for driving sheep, and cows, and hogs, and for hunting rabbits, and foxes, and birds, and rats, and *everything but coons*, and he was n't worth a cent for any of them, and so I concluded he *must be good for them*." The sportsman had, like the learned doctors, *reasoned by exclusion*, and thought it perfectly safe to recommend his dog.

My province, however, is not to argue the case, but to give the facts that have transpired in the progress of these manifestations. The report soon called forth replies and criticisms, and, instead of allaying the excitement in Buffalo and other places, it was greatly increased by the efforts of the professors. The rooms of the ladies were crowded with visitors, many of whom went to confirm the theory of the University doctors, and many from a wish

to make a candid examination themselves. It is hardly necessary to state that the knee-joint theory was soon exploded in the minds of the investigators. Soon after the appearance of the manifesto, the following was published in one of the Buffalo papers:

"ANOTHER SITTING AT THE PHELPS HOUSE.

"A company, consisting of J. L. Reynolds, F. Rumsey, Dr. W. R. Scott, H. Cummings, Dr. G. E. Hayes, Capt. A. Walker, C. C. Bristol, James Dunkin and wife, J. S. Chadwick, S. Albro, and J. Stringham, met at the rooms of Mrs. Fish and Miss Fox, at seven-and-a-half o'clock last Monday evening. Two large hand-bells and one small one had been provided for spirits to manifest their presence with, if they should choose to make use of them. The bells were placed under the table, and the company took seats. Rappings immediately commenced, manifesting the presence of the representatives of the spirit-country. We resolved to ask no questions, and wait for voluntary manifestations. Alphabet called, spelling, 'Sit close, and you may see some new manifestations.' All drew near the table, and waited in silence. After waiting some time, the small bell commenced ringing. The mediums' feet had been placed in the custody of two gentlemen who had not been there before, and their hands were continually on the table. The largest bell now commenced ringing, and, whilst ringing, moved round, traversing the whole area under the table. Two bells rang at once. Afterwards, the whole three united in a kind of chime. The largest bell was placed on Dr. Hayes' foot, and bore on it with a pressure of six times its weight. He put his hand down and touched the bell. He received other manifestations of the presence of an active agent. The medium told him to ask if it was a spirit. He did so, and was answered by a pinch of his toe, signifying the affirmative. 'Is it the spirit of my brother?' *Answer.* 'Yes' (the same signal). He wrote names of his deceased brothers, and it designated its own name by pinching his toe. 'Does the spirit wish to communicate with me?'—'I will communicate with you at

home, when all is calm.' Here silence prevailed for a time. The bells commenced ringing, and occasionally one would fall upon the floor. Alphabet called, spelling, 'Move back a little from the table.' All moved back except Capt. Walker, who made several efforts to obey, but found his chair fast. He looked to see if it was not fast in the carpet, and tried to raise it, but it refused to move upward, backward or forward. Alphabet called, spelling, 'Sit close to the table.' All drew their chairs close to the table, and Capt. Walker embraced the opportunity to see if the order had not loosened his chair; but he could not stir it.

"Now the spirit commenced performances with bells; sometimes ringing them all at once, and sometimes placing them on the feet of one and on the knees of another. Sometimes they would fall on the floor, and sometimes hit the under side of the table. This ceased, the alphabet was called, and the spelling was, 'Look.' We looked, and the three bells stood in a right line, about eighteen inches apart. We resumed our positions, and the operations of ringing, pressing feet and throwing down bells, went on again. Again we were called to 'look,' and the two large bells stood upright, but the small one was missing, and could not be found. One of the company suggested that we look under the larger bells. The largest bell was lifted, and the missing one was found under it, standing erect. The play then went on, till we were again told to 'look,' and the small bell was found under the large one, lying on its side. So it continued for some time, placing the bells in various positions, and calling on the company to 'look.'

"In answer to a question asked some days ago, 'What is the use of these demonstrations?' the spirits said, 'They are made to prove the mediums have no agency in it.' And the question asked by Mr. Stringham, 'May I leave the table whilst the others remain, that I may look under and see the bells ring?' was answered, 'What do you think we require you to sit close to the table for? When spirits make these physical demonstrations

they are compelled to assume shapes which human eyes must not look upon.'

"When the above performances were finished, loud concussions were heard and felt on the under side of the table. They became louder and louder, till the brass candlesticks were made to bound up six or eight inches from the table. The candles were repeatedly thrown out of them, and we were compelled to hold them in our hands. These concussions were equal to those a man could make with a large nail-hammer, lying on his back and striking with all his strength. We expected the bed of the table to be split in pieces, and Mrs. Fish became alarmed, turned pale, and begged us to leave the table. We did not comply, and the concussions were continued for full fifteen minutes. At the close of this very noisy exhibition, the alphabet was called for, and the spelling was, 'We are all done for to-night.' They were not importuned to continue the performances, and we arose from the table. The table was turned up to see what impressions were made, and a great number of deep indentations, in the hard cherry wood, manifested the force with which the middle-sized bell had been thrust against it. Dr. Hayes took the bell and struck the table with the battered iron point which comes through the wooden handle, and made like indentations, though nothing like so deep as those made by the performers. Any one may examine the table, and find the evidence. ONE OF THE COMPANY."

This, coming as it did from, and being endorsed by, respectable citizens, was a strong opposing argument to the knee-joint theory. Every one could see that either these persons had formed a conspiracy to deceive the public, or the professors were proved to be the "humbugs" themselves.

Still another report appeared in a few days, which rendered the explanation of the professors still more ridiculous. It was from the pen of a well-known citizen of Buffalo, who had been appointed by a company to prepare it. I give it as it appeared in one of the Buffalo papers.

"SPIRITUAL COMMUNICATION.

"MR. MAYNARD: Having been deputed by a select company, who visited the two sisters, Mrs. Fish and Miss Fox, at their room in the Phelps House, on Friday evening last, to report what we there saw and heard, it becomes my duty to ask you to give place to this communication in your columns.

"Permit me, before proceeding to the discharge of this assigned duty, to define my own position in relation to the subject. I am, as is well known to all my intimate acquaintances, constitutionally sceptical. I never considered a belief of any averred fact an act of volition, but merely the effect of evidence which is satisfactory to the mind. Hence, I never claimed merit for my faith, nor held myself accountable for the want thereof. I had heard and read much of the 'Rochester Knockings,' as those reputed spiritual manifestations were familiarly called; but, whilst I refrained from applying to them the common epithet of *humbug*, by which every blockhead hastens to put himself on record as a wise and far-seeing doubter of every newly-developed principle in the arcana of nature, I did not, because I could not, believe a word of it. Hearing much that was wonderful from the mouths of men of mind and integrity, who had visited the 'mediums,' I resolved to go and be satisfied by the test of my own senses. I went on the afternoon of Monday last, and was received with unceremonious civility and easy urbanity by the two presiding geniuses.

"There was a company ready to be entertained, and I took a seat with them — all present, save myself, having been before. I was invited to call upon the spirit of some departed friend, — ask for an interview with it. I called for the spirit of my mother, as the most reliable of all my friends who had emigrated to the spirit-land. Rapping immediately announced her presence, and I inquired if she would converse with me. The response, which I received in the usual manner of spelling out by the alphabet, was as follows: 'Yes, my dear son, I am willing to give you evidence of the guardianship of those who cared for you in helpless infancy.' I then asked if it was the spirit of my mother; which

was answered in the affirmative. The next question asked was, 'What year was you born in?' *Answer.* '1745.' This was right. Next, 'How old was you when you died?' *Answer.* 'Sixty-two.' This I disputed, confidently believing her age to have been sixty-one. The discrepancy was not settled. 'How many brothers have I in the spirit-world?' *Answer.* 'Three.' This was true, and it was a truth not known to any person in Buffalo, save myself and wife. 'What is the name of the one who died first?' *Answer.* 'John.' This no one present but myself could possibly have known. 'How old was he when he died?' *Answer.* 'Seven.' True again. So in relation to the names, ages and deaths, of the other two deceased brothers. I asked the spirit of my father how long ago he died. The answer came in twenty-seven distinct raps, and one which was barely audible. He died some time in the year 1823. 'What year was you born in?' I wrote a number of dates before I came to 1750. When I had written 1749, and before I commenced 1750, the affirmative sounds were given. I then wrote 1750, and asked which was right. 'Is this?' pointing to 1749. No answer. 'Is this?' pointing to 1750. The answer was affirmative. I asked, 'What month was you born in?' adding, 'I will commence at one, and write the numeral characters in their order, and you will please to rap when I come to the number which designates the month.' I commenced, and when I had got as far as three a confused rapping was heard, which I was told was a command for me to desist. I obeyed, and immediately eleven distinct raps were heard, which indicated November. I am not sure that this is true, as the old family Bible, which contains the record, is in the hands of a distant brother; but I believe it to be the true answer. I asked many more questions, to which I received correct answers, and never an untrue one, excepting the above-named discrepancies. I detail these circumstances to show why I was one of the company who went there on Friday evening last.

"The company consisted of Dr. Scott, C. C. Bristol, J. Stringham, F. Rumsey and lady, Mrs. Bradley, Mrs. Stevens and my-

self. When all had assembled, we took seats around the table. Mrs. Fish and Miss Fox, the two 'mediums,' were requested to take seats on a sofa which stood between the table and the wall. Dr. Scott and myself were seated, by arrangement, on the right and left of these two ladies, and they were requested to put their feet on ours, and to keep them there, which they did. The purpose of this arrangement will be understood by the reader. When all was still the spirits (I use the term assentingly) commenced such a clatter of rappings that there seemed to be quite a company of them. This, we were told, was to manifest their presence and their willingness to be consulted.

"The confusion of sounds ceased, and the alphabet was called for by five distinct raps, which, it appears, is the invariable signal. Mrs. Fish read the alphabet, and the letters designated by the rappings made the following words: 'Get a better supply of paper before you get engaged, and let your minds run in one perfect channel. In that way you will soon be able to get satisfactory demonstrations.' A supply of paper was procured, and all were seated and still again. Two small bells had been placed under the table, one at each end. When all was quiet, the signal for the alphabet was given, and the spelling which followed was, 'All sit close to the table and to each other. Move the bells.' The bells were then moved to near the centre of the table. Alphabet called again, 'Put your hands on the table.' All obeyed the mandate, and immediately the bells commenced ringing. They rang for a few minutes, and again the alphabet was demanded. The spelling was, 'You will perceive, by what you have already heard, that a great and mighty development is about to be made to mankind.' At this moment a rap was heard at the door, which was made by a gentleman who wished to come in, but who retired on being informed that it was a private party. Some remark was made by the younger of the two mediums, in relation to the interruption, which affected the other to tears. A considerable interval of silence followed, and we began to fear that our entertainment would not be resumed; but the call for the alphabet

proved that we had not been deserted by our invisible friends. The spelling was: 'We want you to cheer up, dear children. All sit close. Hands on the table.' Now the bells commenced ringing again, moving all round under the table, giving forth tones the most musical, mellow and soothing. The ringing ceased, and the alphabet was called. The spelling was, 'This is done to harmonize you all.' *Question by the acting medium.* 'Do the spirits wish us to be in a happy state of mind?' *Answer.* 'Yes.' Then followed, 'I want you all to reach out your feet, except the four on the sofa.' This was done, and immediately Mrs. Stevens said something had taken hold of her feet. She was directed to ask if it was a spirit, which she did, and received an affirmative answer. 'Is it the spirit of my father?' 'Yes' was replied, and the respondent continued, 'We are glad you came here.' Following this was a harsh, grating sound, not unlike the friction of a saw which is pushed slowly through a board, and drawn back quickly. This was continued but a short time, when the alphabet was called for, and the spelling was, 'I breathed so when I was dying.' Then the same sound of grating heath was heard, and it continued like one laboring in the last moments of life. These breathings became shorter and further between, till a seemingly ineffectual attempt, like a hiccough, closed the drama, and the death-scene was complete.

"Hereupon the alphabet was called for, and the following address was spelled: — 'Such is the end of man's existence on the earth; but he suddenly awakes to a glorious immortality. This, my dear friends, is demonstrated to relieve mankind from the dread of changing existence. The appearance of suffering is not real; therefore I exhort you to look forward with joy for the happy transition from earth to heaven. You have need of great watchfulness and care that you may be permitted to enter the society of the blest. Done.'

"What was very remarkable in the delivery of this address, as the medium read the alphabet, the letters were designated sometimes by raps, as usual, and sometimes by ringing of a bell. The

latter method was used, I think, quite as much as the former. During the whole delivery the feet of the lady-mediums rested entirely on Dr. Scott's feet and mine, and their hands constantly rested on the table. This, as it seems to me, puts to rest any question of their agency in producing the sounds. Mrs. Stevens, during the whole of the communication by 'spirits,' felt a pair of large and powerful hands grasping her knees, the pressure of which, she avers, was quite painful. She also felt a weight in her lap, which was equal to her father while living. His name was Asa Ranson. The female portrait which hangs in the Common Council room is that of his daughter, and a sister of Mrs. Stevens. The latter lady says that the death-scene which was enacted in our presence was a perfect representation of the reality which she witnessed.

"At the conclusion of the address, it was asked by the acting medium, 'Are the spirits *all* done?' No reply was made. It was then asked, 'If we put paper under the table, will the spirits write?' *Answer by the alphabet.* 'We will make marks on paper.' A piece of paper was then taken and passed around, to be examined by the company. All saw that it was without scratch or mark of any kind. A scratching sound was heard under the table, and also the sound that paper makes when it is torn. The alphabet was called, and the spelling was, 'Look.' The paper was taken out, and found to be torn in pieces and scratched as with a nail, or some dull instrument. It was then asked, 'If we put paper and pencil under, will the spirits write?' Three raps were given as answer in the affirmative, and the alphabet was called. The spelling was, 'Keep your pencil.' Another piece of paper was then handed round. We all examined it closely, and found it all fair and clean, without the least mark whatever. It was put under the table by the last examiner, and the scratching commenced. Directly the alphabet was called for, and 'Look' spelled out. The paper was taken out, and found to be scratched as before, and torn a little; but the spirit had fulfilled its promise. It had written — for the figure 7 in plain pencil-mark

stood on the untorn part of it. The figure was found to be just one inch long, and seemed as if made by the hand of a farmer, or mechanic, who aimed at plainness rather than elegance in his chirographical performances. I have the paper in my possession, and will exhibit it to any one who wishes to see it.

"I had forgotten to mention that during the communications from Mrs. Stevens' father, she read the alphabet part of the time, and received answers by a rap on her foot. She was too much excited to continue, and the alphabet was read by the medium.

"When the last paper was brought out from under the table, we all expressed a desire to know what was meant by the character 7. Our deliberations on that subject were soon cut short by a call for the alphabet, and the meaning spelled out as follows:

"'Seven of this party will be mediums. Do not ask which. We are done for to-night.' *Question.* 'Will the spirits answer no more questions?' *Answer.* 'We are all done for to-night. Move away from the table.'

"There were many other incidents during the sitting. The lady-medium who sat next to Dr. Scott had her dress pulled and held fast, and she invited the doctor to try and see if he could release it. He made a strong effort, but gave it up for fear of tearing it. Several others had their feet handled and their clothes pulled. I felt a palpable pressure against the inside of my leg, and a pinch of my ankle, whilst a bell was ringing close to my feet — no person being near me but Miss Fox, and she had both her feet on one of mine, and both her hands on the table.

"This is a faithful statement of facts, for the truth of which, as far as they relate to the sitting on Friday evening, I refer the reader to all the names given above. I refrain from conclusions and comments, and close with the simple declaration that I am much puzzled and astonished. S. Albro."

On the 14th of March, Mrs. Fish wrote a letter to the editor

of the *Commercial Advertiser*, in vindication, which contains some important statements *that have never been contradicted*, and I deem it important that it should be placed on record as part of the controversy. It is as follows:

"BUFFALO, March 14th, 1851.

"*To the Editor of the Commercial Advertiser:*

"I gladly avail myself of the privilege you have so courteously extended to me to defend myself through your columns against the aspersions which, if suffered to pass unheeded, might bring temporary disgrace upon the cause in which we are engaged as involuntary though willing instruments of a higher power.

"Some time since, you gave place in the columns of your paper to a statement, made by Professors Lee, Flint and Coventry, which they put forth to the public as an exposition of the 'Rochester Knockings.' The positions which they assumed we knew to be fallacious and unsupportable, and we at once challenged a fair and impartial investigation, believing that it was not in the nature of these gentlemen to seek out conviction of fraud contrary to evidence which I knew must convince every candid mind. It is true that when our feet were placed on cushions stuffed with shavings, and resting on our heels, there were no sounds heard, and that sounds were heard when our feet were resting on the floor; and it is just as true that if our friendly spirits retired when they witnessed such harsh proceedings on the part of our persecutors, it was not in our power to detain them.

"Dr. Lee says he heard two sounds when he held Margaretta's knees. I counted five at one time during that operation, two at another, and three at another, — which made ten, instead of two. But I do not consider this circumstance of any importance whatever. The spirit in which they engaged in the investigation was too palpable to be mistaken, — evincing too great a determination to carry their points to admit of the possibility of a conviction. They had heard sounds made by limber *joints*, and because one person could produce one kind of sounds, made by knee joints,

they would have the community believe that all the sounds heard in our presence for the last four years were produced by thumping or snapping the *knee joints*. As professional men, whose reputation is dear to them, I would like to have them tell your readers what condition our poor joints would be in by this time, after four years' constant service in this almost ceaseless operation. I will not call this quackery, but will be content to leave it to the public to pass judgment on their professional erudition. Two of the professors made very little or no investigation. They were in our room but a few minutes previous to the appearance of the article in your paper.

"Professor Lee, however, was in to see us frequently, and, at several times, expressed great surprise, affirming, with great apparent candor, that the sounds were truly astonishing. He witnessed the answers that were received by Mr. Chase, which were all correct and very astonishing; yet he did not attempt to account for them. Now, if Dr. Lee can account for the correct answers that are given, as well as how the sounds are produced, it will gratify me very much, and I will try to account for some of the large ones. Mr. Chase called again, a day or two after that, and could get no correct answers; but this was no matter of surprise to me after his having been in close communion with Dr. Lee; for we are taught to believe that spirits associate by affinity, and, if that be true, he was no doubt led into a different society of spirits by associating with him. I do not believe the spirits of my dear departed friends could manifest themselves in their presence, and I would not willingly call on them to mingle in such society. The word 'Impostor' grated very harshly on my ears, and I struggle very hard to overcome the feelings which such a cruel charge will naturally excite in every human bosom where honor finds a lodgment; but, in spite of all my endeavors, I still feel like other mortals; and this feeling prompts me to demand justice at the hands of a discerning public, and especially those who have witnessed the entire success of the same experiments which proved a total failure with our Esculapian knee-buckles.

"The committees, which have frequently met since the affair with the M. D.s, have witnessed all the experiments they attempted, and can testify to their entire success. One day, in presence of a number of persons, the same cushions were brought out, and we took seats, elevated, with our feet upon them, resting on our heels, when the sounds were distinctly heard by all present. Capt. Rounds and Judge Burroughs were present on that occasion.

"Our feet were held from the floor by Dr. Gray and Mr. Clark, in presence of the whole committee, on the evening of the investigation made by the medical gentlemen (after they left), and the sounds were distinctly heard, which was allowed by the committee to be a far more satisfactory test, as they could distinctly hear the sounds under their feet, and feel the floor *jar* while our feet were held nearly or quite a foot from the floor. The whole committee consisted of Dr. Gray and lady, Mr. Clark and lady, Mr. Everit and lady, Mr. Stringham, Mr. Bristol, and two gentlemen invited by the professors.

"Most of this committee were persons we had never seen before, but we are informed they are persons whose testimony can be relied upon. I would like to have Drs. Lee, Flint and Coventry, club their professional lore and perceptive acumen, and inform the public how bells are rung, and gongs made to ring out tunes, untouched by human hands; for, if you have any confidence in your own citizens, they can tell you what I now affirm is true. I will not be particular to mention the names of all the persons who have witnessed these striking phenomena, but I will refer you to the following: C. C. Bristol, Mr. Gibson, Mr. Stringham, Mr. Stephen Dudley, Mr. L. Ramsey, Mr. Tows, Mr. Gould and Mr. Tallmadge, and they can refer you to dozens of other respectable persons, who have witnessed the same. While these manifestations were going on, many of the persons above-named have held us both so fast by the feet that we could not stir without their knowledge. They (the Drs.) have attempted to explain one of the least important points; and, as we know, have signally failed. Now let them

proceed to the more difficult points, or manfully acknowledge their failure and our innocence of fraud.

"As Dr. Lee is the editor of the *Medical Journal* which is published in this city, and as he saw fit to publish the injurious report against our moral integrity which was made by the visiting committee of M. D.s, we hope he will manifest the sense of honor which his standing in society warrants us in looking for, by publishing the contradiction, which must now be evident to him, and thereby make the reparation as apparent as the injury. This would be just, if not magnanimous. Yours, &c.,

"ANN L. FISH."

On the 17th, Dr. Lee wrote to the New York *Tribune* as follows:

"DR. LEE ON THE KNOCKINGS AGAIN.

"BRUNSWICK, Maine, Monday, March 17.

"TO THE EDITOR OF THE TRIBUNE: Several articles have appeared in your paper, purporting to be replies to my communication of Feb. 25th, respecting the 'Rochester Knockers.' Two or more of these are from lecturers, whose pecuniary interest it is to keep up the delusion, and prevent any satisfactory explanation from being believed by the public. Their personalities shield them very effectually from any notice from me; while, at the same time, they betray a bad temper and a worse cause. The exposition, made by myself, in connection with my colleagues, Drs. Flint and Coventry, of Buffalo, in relation to the causes of these mysterious 'rappings,' is true, and will bide the test of any investigation, properly conducted, that may be made, as it has those already made. If there are any individuals so simple as to swallow the other *alleged* 'phenomena,' of which the same party or others are the 'media,' such as the removal of tables, the wonderful answers to questions, etc., after we have satisfactorily demonstrated the principal phenomenon (the 'rappings') an imposition and fraud, I think it as well to leave such persons in their simplicity; for, in their anxious search after the marvellous and wonderful,

I fear they would grasp at something still more absurd and ridiculous.

"In regard to the 'Providence rappers' and the 'infant media' of Mr. Bristow, I doubt not they will also be exorcised in due time, as the Rochester, and, as I am informed by Professor Knight, of New Haven, the Stratford rappers have already been. But don't hurry us too fast; we have other business to attend to besides exposing 'spirit-knockings.' I hope the swindle, however, as it is now exposed, will be taken cognizance of by the local authorities in those places where the imposition may again be attempted.

"Those who wish to see a full and accurate account of the manner in which these 'raps' are produced, through the 'mediums' of the different joints of the body, may consult with advantage the able article by Prof. Austin Flint, in the *Buffalo Medical Journal* (for March), and the same, with additions, published in pamphlet form, by Mr. George H. Derby, of that city.

"CHARLES A. LEE."

On the receipt of this letter, Mr. Greeley, editor of the *Tribune*, published the foregoing letter of Mrs. Fish, introducing it with the following remarks:

"The above letter from Dr. Lee seems to require the publication of the following from Mrs. Fish (the oldest of the three sisters); this being, so far as we are aware, the first and only communication ever addressed by one of them to the public. And we think it but fair to add that *we* have been present when 'rappings' were made on tables, chairs, etc., not only in the presence of these, but of other alleged 'mediums,' when it was as certain as human eyesight could make it that *no person whatever was in contact with the article from which the sounds appeared to come.* 'Ah!' says a doubter, 'you *thought* they proceeded from the table because you *expected* them there.' Well; a little girl, less than two years old, who had never before paid any attention to

this matter, was attracted to the vicinity of the table by the loudness of the 'rappings,' and stood near it for some time, *looking curiously first upon and then under the table*, palpably interested and puzzled by the hearing of sounds proceeding from a place where no known cause for sound existed. The table was a small, slight, plain one, without covering, and no chance for even a mouse to be within some feet of it unobserved.

"Then the fact stated by Mrs. Fish, that the sounds heard in the presence of the same 'mediums' are of exceedingly various character, — not merely loud and low at the same time, but imitating sawing, planing, creaking, beating time, etc., etc., — and especially the fact that, when but a single 'medium' is present, there often seemed to be a dozen invisibles 'rapping' at the same time — loud, low, quick, slower, etc., etc. — does not seem to be adequately accounted for by Dr. Lee's theory.

"So much we feel impelled to say, no matter whether our scientific and philosophic correspondent is moved thereby to class us with impostors or (more charitably) with dupes. It does seem to us that Dr. Lee has disposed of the whole matter too summarily, and that, after having volunteered to enter the lists as an exposer of what he represents as a gross, impudent, pernicious swindle, he ought to have proceeded at least so far as to obtain a report or decision, by some impartial committee, that he has made good his assertions. "Ed. Trib."

Such transactions, so well authenticated, had a tendency to shake the confidence of the public in the *scientific* discovery of the university professors. Indeed, their "report," after going the rounds of the press, was soon looked upon as a desperate attempt to confirm an opinion they had previously formed. The lady of that city, who could make a slight noise with her knee joints, was much surprised at the use made of the fact by the professors. She had an interview with the two sisters, Mrs. Fish and Miss Fox, and declared that there was no resemblance in the sounds. When it is known that sounds are made on tables and floors,

as loud as a strong man could produce with a hammer, the story of their being produced by the knee will not find many believers.

One fact should be noticed. The *gentlemanly* professors never speak of the two sisters as ladies, or women, but as "females," leaving the world in ignorance, but for the attending circumstances, whether they were females of the genus Homo, or some other part of animal creation. It was obviously meant as an insult, and was such as branded the authors with a total want of gentlemanly and dignified character.

I have very little of the history of the manifestations in Buffalo since that exciting time. There are but few mediums there, as far as I can learn. These are mostly writing mediums. If there are others, I have not succeeded in getting the information, but there are undoubtedly some. There are some of the best and most steadfast friends of spiritualism in that city.

CHAPTER XV.

MANIFESTATIONS IN WASHINGTON, D. C. — CONGRESSIONAL MEDIUMS — WRITING MEDIUMS — VISIT OF THE FOX FAMILY — GOV. TALLMADGE — SINGULAR MANIFESTATIONS IN DRAWING — MEMORIAL TO CONGRESS — DEBATE IN THE SENATE, &C.

In the month of June, 1852, I visited the city of Washington, D. C., for the purpose of attending a convention.* During the week I spent there, I ascertained, from members of Congress and others, that frequent meetings or circles were held at different places, for the purpose of investigating the different phenomena classed under the head of spiritual manifestations. Their investigations had led to a conviction, in the minds of many, that some intelligence, which had the power of giving them information on a variety of subjects, and telling them occurrences of which they had no previous knowledge or thought, was the originator of these manifestations.

One member of Congress, at least,† had become a writing medium, and, although the fact was known to but few, there was evidence, to his acquaintances, that some power beyond or aside from himself was operating upon him. He related one instance of independent writing, that is a most satisfactory evidence that, notwithstanding so many of the communications by writing are in exact accordance with the mind and talents of the medium, there are cases where the mind of the medium has no such control. He had been expecting to make some remarks on a certain subject; and one evening, when alone in his room, took up a pen, and, for

* The Industrial Congress. † Hon. A. P. Hascall, of Le Roy, N. Y.

curiosity, asked the spirits to write a speech for him. He had become so thoroughly satisfied that no certainty existed of getting anything correct or important from this source, that he was only prompted by curiosity to try this experiment.

On taking the pen, his hand immediately began to write with unusual rapidity, in good language and quite logical, arguing from the premises assumed, but every sentiment utterly and entirely opposed to all his ideas on the subject, and directly opposite to the remarks he intended to make. He continued to write till a page was written down. His hand moved to turn over the paper; he remarked, "I'll hear you through, but I don't believe a word you say." His hand only wrote the faster, until two or three pages were written. It was really a very fair speech, but directly opposite to all Mr. H.'s opinions. At the end it was signed "James O'Connor," a name Mr. Hascall had never before heard of. It is unnecessary to add that Judge H. followed his own reason, instead of yielding to an intelligence of which he knew so little; but the occurrence itself is a remarkable one.

Judge H. also had some very singular experience, while in Washington, in regard to information being given him to the effect that some member of his family was sick or dead, and the most solemn assurance given of its truth; when, on writing home, he ascertained that all was well, and the pretended information given was totally false. On the other hand, occurrences taking place at a distance, of which he had no knowledge, were told with the greatest accuracy and truth. Why these contradictions in the character of the communications, he could not tell; but both equally proved it to be entirely beyond the workings of his own mind, and that there was intelligence there, whether true or false. The experience of Judge H. has been singular, as that of many others; but, as I depend entirely upon memory, I cannot state it more minutely. I believe he has never made his experience public to any great degree. It will be remembered that he was on one of the first investigating committees in Rochester at the time the subject was first brought before the public.

In the month of February, 1853, Mrs. Fox and her two youngest daughters, Margaretta and Catharine, visited Washington, by the request of a number of eminent men in Congress and out, who wished to see and know more of the manifestations. During their stay in the city they were visited by many eminent American statesmen, and distinguished men from Europe. Among others, Hon. N. P. Tallmadge, ex-governor of Wisconsin, Gen. Waddy Thompson, Gen. Hamilton, Hon. Robert B. Campbell, and many others, I do not now remember, were almost constant in their attendance and investigations; and, like most others, who have fairly tested it, they became satisfied of the intelligence, independent of the media, and all whose names I have mentioned fully believe the intelligence to emanate from spirits.

Gov. Tallmadge openly and manfully braved public opinion, and has given his opinions to the world as freely as he would on any other subject. I cannot give a better idea of some of the transactions at Washington, than by giving a letter or two from his pen. The following, or so much of it as was written to Mr. Simmons in relation to the statements of Mrs. Whitman, touching the astonishing proofs of identity presented to Mr. S. (which is given in the chapter on Providence, R. I.), I saw long before it was published. The occasion that called it out is sufficiently explained in the letter of Gov. T. to the editors of the *Intelligencer*.

"COLLAMORE HOUSE, NEW YORK,
April 30, 1853.

"MESSRS. GALES AND SEATON: A friend has just called my attention to an article in the 'National Intelligencer' of the 25th inst., headed 'Impostures and Delusions.' The article is not under the editorial head; still, it is not marked as a communication, and was considered by the gentleman who handed it to me, and would be considered by the generality of your readers, as an editorial. Be this, however, as it may, the article is published by you without any dissent from its views, and may therefore be taken by the uninformed as meeting your approbation.

"The writer alludes to the 'Salem Hangings,' and says, 'That there may yet arise, at future periods, similar or analogous disorders of the popular mind, invading and corrupting the whole body politic, which it may, in like manner, become necessary to *suppress by the strong hand of the law. Indeed, we might point, as already coming within this category, the Rochester Knockings, with their kindred train of rascalities and abominations.*'

"A little further on, the writer adds: 'In like manner, it is the general opinion of well-informed and deep-thinking persons, that it is already high time to call in legislative aid, if the execution of no existing statutes can reach the present evil, for this perilous imposture, or yet more perilous contagion of morbid minds.'

"This is a sweeping denunciation of all who have investigated these 'spiritual manifestations,' and who have expressed a belief in their truth. And the spirit which pervades the whole article would not only recall the 'Salem Hangings,' but would also invoke the 'fires of Smithfield.' I have no hesitation in saying, I am one 'coming within this category.' And, let me assure you, there are throughout this widely-extended country some of the brightest and most exalted intellects who have, from a thorough investigation of this matter, come to the same conclusion. Yet such men are to be thus denounced by a writer who is so far behind the intelligence of the age, that he includes in his denunciations mesmerism and clairvoyance, which are considered by intelligent and scientific men as well established as electricity and magnetism. If this were all, he would deserve simply to be laughed at. But, in regard to spiritualism, he probably never condescended to examine the subject, and yet assumes that he knows more about it by mere instinct than others of equal talent, to say the least, do by the most patient research and philosophical investigation.

"This article, I am persuaded, has been published by you without full examination or due reflection. It runs counter to all the principles of 'law and order' which have been so uniformly

enforced in the 'National Intelligencer.' And I regret extremely that such disorganizing, such abominable, such flagitious sentiments should, even indirectly, have the influence of your names. I feel myself as being included in these denunciations; for, although I do not obtrude my opinions or my facts on any one, still I have communicated freely with those who have voluntarily sought information on this subject. During the last winter at Washington, I conferred fully, and on their own solicitation, with some of the most distinguished men in the nation. I gave to them my own opinions, and the exalted communications and facts on which those opinions were founded.

"Retired from public life, I have desired in this, as in all other matters, to avoid public observation. At the same time you have been acquainted with me well enough, and long enough, to know that, when I have deliberately formed an opinion on any subject, I have that rare quality, called moral courage, which enables me to avow it either in private or in public.

"So far as the public are concerned I have as yet endeavored to maintain a profound silence. But, considering myself as one of those so vindictively denounced in the article alluded to, further silence on my part would argue pusillanimity, and cease to be a virtue. I have not language to express my astonishment at the suggestions and doctrines there put forth; doctrines which subvert the very principles of civil and religious freedom, guaranteed by the constitution under which we live. Who would have conceived that, at this advanced period of the nineteenth century, whilst we are surrounded by the multiplied evidences of the rapid progress in science and the arts, we should witness such evidences of bigotry and superstition, and such a retrogression towards the 'Cimmerian Darkness,' which spread like a pall over the ancient world? If there was ever a monomania on any subject, it is on the part of those who have, without knowledge or investigation, denounced so madly these 'spiritual manifestations.' I find no fault with those who do not believe in them; but I cannot with-

hold an expression of my surprise that intelligent minds can be found to denounce those who do investigate them.

"To vindicate myself, therefore, from these aspersions, I enclose you a copy of a letter which I wrote early last January to the Hon. James F. Simmons, former United States senator from Rhode Island. The letter was written in the confidence of private friendship, and not intended for the public eye. Such as it is, however, I send it to you, and ask, as an act of justice, that you will publish it, together with this letter, in the 'National Intelligencer.'

"You need not be told who James F. Simmons is. He occupied a seat for several years with me in the Senate of the United States; and, amongst all the members of that body, you did not number two better friends. We were both deemed capable at that time of examining satisfactorily any question of finance, or of political economy, on which we might be engaged. But now, because we have thoroughly investigated these 'spiritual manifestations,' and believe in their truth, we are included in the general, and Judge Edmonds in the particular, denunciations of this writer. I have given the character of Judge Edmonds in my letter to Mr. Simmons; and I will only add here, in reference to the retailed slander and sneering remark of the writer in regard to his decisions, that, as a judge, he unites the qualities of two of the brightest luminaries of the English bench, namely, the profundity of Bacon with the intuition of Mansfield. Very respectfully, yours,

"N. P. TALLMADGE.

"LETTER TO MR. SIMMONS.

"WASHINGTON, January 10, 1853.

"MY DEAR SIR: I was pleased to see, in the January number of 'Putnam's Monthly,' a statement of your experience in 'spiritual manifestations.' In our conversation at Washington, during the last session of Congress, you had stated the same to me.

"My experience is probably more limited than yours; but

yours has served, in some measure, to strengthen the impressions made on my own mind by the investigation I have given to this mysterious subject.

"I had heard, for a long time, of the 'Rochester Knockings,' but had paid no heed to them; on the contrary, had considered them a delusion, which would soon pass away. I continued under these impressions till some time last spring, when my attention was called to a newspaper attack on Judge Edmonds for being a believer in these 'spiritual manifestations.' I had known Judge Edmonds for thirty years; had practised law in the same courts; had served in the Senate of New York with him; had been associated with him also as a member of the Court for the Correction of Errors, the highest court in the state; had known him since that time as a justice of the Supreme Court, and more recently as a judge of the Court of Appeals, where he holds a deservedly high and distinguished rank amongst his brethren, the able judges of that court of last resort in the state of New York. I also knew him as a gentleman of finished classical education, and as a lawyer of an acute mind, and a decided talent for investigation. And, above all, I knew him to be a man of unimpeachable integrity. Knowing all these things, I concluded that if he had become a believer in 'spiritual manifestations,' it was at least a subject worthy of investigation.

"Accordingly, I determined to investigate it, as opportunity should present. I thought I could bring to bear on it a pretty good share of common sense, and a reasonable talent for investigation. And knowing withal that I had not a great deal of enthusiasm in my composition, I believed I could enter upon the investigation without much danger of being carried away by any delusion.

"In this frame of mind I commenced the investigation of this subject; being an entire unbeliever, but entering upon it with a sincere desire to ascertain the truth. I will not trouble you with the facts which were developed in the progress of my investigation. Suffice it to say, they were of the most astounding charac-

ter. I soon became satisfied of two things: first, that the 'medium' did not know from whence the 'rap' proceeded; secondly, that she did not know from whence the communication came. Perhaps I ought in this connection to observe that, in pursuing this investigation, all my questions were propounded *mentally*. The medium did not and could not know what they were, and of course could not tell what answers to give, or what would be appropriate responses to the questions thus mentally propounded.

"Objectors cannot deny that these answers come from an *intelligent* source; but they sometimes say that they are to be found in the mind of the interrogator. It is true that the interrogator oftentimes knows the answer to the question *mentally* propounded by him; and it is equally true that he frequently does *not* know what the appropriate answer should be, but ascertains its truth afterwards. Neither can he in any way anticipate many communications which are made without any questions being asked. I have frequently received such communications of an elevated character, and far above the capacity of the medium. I conclude, therefore, they do not come from the medium, nor from the mind of the interrogator.

"These communications, too, are perfectly characteristic of the individuals from whom they purport to come. I have had frequent communications, purporting to come from my old friend, John C. Calhoun, which his intimate friends would pronounce perfectly characteristic of him; and some of them, both in style and sentiment, worthy of him in his palmiest days in the Senate of the United States. I have had similar ones, purporting to come from Henry Clay and Daniel Webster, of the same elevated order, and peculiarly characteristic of the individual. I can make the same remark of other individuals.

"I have seen rapping mediums, writing mediums and speaking mediums, and have received communications through all of them. I have witnessed physical manifestations, such as the movement of tables, without any visible agency. These *physical* manifesta-

tions are more satisfactory to the mass of mankind, because they appeal directly to the senses. I am better pleased myself with the *moral*, if I may so call them, than the physical manifestations.

"The next question is, from whence do these manifestations, whether physical or moral, proceed? Judge Edmonds was told that they were all according to natural laws, which would in due time be fully developed; and he was directed to read Von Reichenbach's Dynamics of Magnetism and Electricity (a book he had never heard of before), as a means of enabling him to understand these laws. I have read the book myself. The writer proves conclusively the discovery of a new element, which he calls *od*, or the *odic force*. He proves that this element pervades not only the human system, but the material world and the whole universe. He finds it in the rays of the sun, moon and stars. Late English writers of high reputation consider the existence of the odic force as well established as that of magnetism and electricity. It combines many of the qualities of the two latter, and is antagonistic to some of them. It may be presumed, therefore, that this newly-discovered element enters, in some sort, into these manifestations. It is said that this accounts for the *physical* manifestations. But no one can show *how* this force produces them. And, even if this were proved, it still remains to account for the *intelligence* in the communications which are received. That intelligence does not come from tables, or chairs, or other material objects. It must come from mind, or from a spiritual source. This new element may be the medium of conveying it to us. To illustrate, let me suppose that a friend in New York wishes to communicate with me in Washington. He sends his communication to me through the electric telegraph. The communication is received and written down here the same as a communication is received and written down through the rapping medium. I ask how is that communication from my friend conveyed to me? The answer is, by the electric fluid. But does the electric fluid *make* the communication? The answer is no; the *mind* of my friend

does that. So in the case of the rapping medium, the communication comes from some source of *intelligence*. The intelligence, as every one knows who has investigated these matters, does not come from the table that is moved by some invisible power, nor from the medium, nor from any one present. It is, therefore, to be inferred that it comes from a spiritual source; and more especially when communications are received on subjects exclusively known to those communicating.

"Some have attempted to account for all those things by mesmerism, clairvoyance and psychology. Let it be remembered that twelve or fifteen years ago, mesmerism, clairvoyance, &c., were as much denounced as 'spiritual rappings' are now. They were called humbugs and jugglery then, as these manifestations are at this day. This prejudice and denunciation continued in England till the publication of the philosophical treatise of the Rev. Mr. Townshend, which changed the whole current of public sentiment. There have been many able publications on these subjects since that time, and they are now considered as well established as magnetism or electricity. Suppose the denunciations had deterred philosophical minds from investigating them, how much light would have been lost to science and the world! Now, all the magic, the mysteries, the witchcraft, the necromancy of the ancient world, from the time of the Delphic Oracle, are explained by these modern investigations; and all popular delusions, however exaggerated, are now shown to have truth for their basis. I have read many of the ablest writers on these subjects; but to my mind not one of them has been able to account for these 'spiritual manifestations.' Hence the greater importance of continuing these investigations. To denounce, therefore, those engaged in them, is as unwise as it is unphilosophical; and more especially if such denunciation come from those who never witnessed any of the facts and manifestations which have convinced the judgments of men equally intelligent, equally honest, and as little likely to be deluded as themselves.

"But what is the objection to investigating this matter? Is it

feared that there may be some discrepancies between the religious sentiments communicated and the tenets of the different religious denominations amongst us? Such discrepancies are heard every Sunday from our different pulpits throughout the land; and still all denominations of Christians, though differing about particular tenets, maintain the great and leading doctrines of Christianity. And from the investigation I have given the subject, I agree with the Rev. Adin Ballou, who has written the most candid and satisfactory explanation I have seen, that '*whatever of divine fundamental principle, absolute truth, and essential righteousness, there is in the Bible, in the popular religion, and in the established churches will stand. It cannot be done away. On the contrary, it will be corroborated and fulfilled by spirit manifestations.*'.

"It has been objected that there have been cases of derangement arising from these manifestations. If there be such cases, I apprehend they are less numerous than they have been represented, and may have arisen from other causes than the one to which they have been attributed. But, be that as it may, and be the number great or small, it has no possible bearing on this question. Derangement has often followed from religious excitement, and the over-excited passions of the human heart. Still, this is no objection to the investigation of the truths of religion, or of the emotions of our nature. Neither is it an objection to investigating the subject under consideration. Denunciations cannot stop it, but, on the contrary, tend to encourage it. But for the denunciation of Judge Edmonds, an old acquaintance and friend, I doubt whether my attention would have been called to it. If it be true, it should be known; for great and mighty results must follow. Already we hear of many who have been converted from infidelity, and now proclaim the immortality of the soul, and that 'death is' *not* 'an eternal sleep.' If it be not true, that can only be ascertained by investigation; and the sooner it be done the better. In either case, therefore, all good citizens, all intelligent minds, should unite in ascertaining the

truth or falsity of this the greatest phenomenon of the present or any preceding age.

"It is understood to be a general belief, at this day, amongst all Christian denominations, that spirits visit this earth; that they impress us, and thereby protect us from accident and danger. Every one's own experience will confirm the truth of this observation. A communication to me, purporting to come from Mr. Calhoun, conveys the same idea, wherein he says, 'We, by our united will acting upon spirits clothed in flesh, influence them to perform duties which benefit mankind.' If, then, such be the general belief, is it any great stretch of that belief, after the astounding facts we have seen and heard, to suppose that there may have been discovered a mode by which spirits can now communicate with us, in addition to attending and impressing us, and that they are permitted so to do? To my mind, the conclusion is perfectly rational and philosophical. With all the evidences of progress which surround us here, how can we discard such evidences from the spirit-world, which is believed to be one of 'everlasting progression?'

"Many persons, unable to resist the evidence of the spiritual source of these communications, are finally compelled to admit them, and, as a last resort, charge them as emanating from evil spirits. I consider this as giving up the controversy. There *may* be communications from evil spirits. But that does not conflict with the communications which bear internal evidence of coming from the 'spirits of just men made more perfect.' There is an abundance of communications purporting to come from such a source, and of the purest, most elevated, and most religious character. If the 'evil one' has prompted these, I confess I have heretofore formed a very wrong estimate of his character.

"On the whole, the result of my investigations thus far is that the weight of evidence is in favor of the truth of these 'spiritual manifestations.' But I shall continue to investigate as opportunity offers. And if, hereafter, the preponderance of evidence

shall incline to the other side, I shall as readily announce that result as I have above communicated the other.

"In the mean time, let us exercise all possible charity for those who do not believe; and especially those who denounce without investigation, and condemn without knowledge; for they are those that most need it.

"Excuse this desultory communication, and accept the assurance of the high respect and esteem with which I am, very truly, yours.

"N. P. Tallmadge.

"Hon. James F. Simmons."

LETTER NUMBER TWO.

"Baltimore, Tuesday, April 12, 1853.

"Dear Madam: I seize a few moments, while detained here a short time on business, to give you a more extended account of the 'physical manifestations,' to which I alluded in a former letter. In this account I shall confine myself to those which purport to come from the spirit of John C. Calhoun.

"I have received numerous communications from him, from the commencement of my investigation of this subject down to the present time. Those communications have been received through rapping mediums, writing mediums, and speaking mediums. They are of the most extraordinary character. In style and sentiment they would do honor to him in his best days on earth.

"After the arrival of the Misses Fox in Washington city, in February last, I called on them by appointment, and, at once, received a communication from Calhoun.

"I then wrote down and propounded *mentally* the following question:

"'Can you *do* anything (meaning physical manifestations) to confirm me in the truth of these revelations, and to remove from my mind the least shadow of unbelief?'

"To which I received the following answer:

"'I will give you a communication on Monday, at seven-and-a-half o'clock. Do not fail to be here. I will then give you an explanation. JOHN C. CALHOUN.'

"It is proper here to remark that all communications, referred to in this letter, were made by Calhoun after a call for the alphabet, and rapped out, letter by letter, and taken down by me in the usual way. They were made in the presence of the Misses Fox and their mother.

"I called on Monday, at the hour appointed, and received the following communication:

"'My friend, the question is often put to you, "What good can result from these manifestations?" I will answer it:

"'It is to draw mankind together in harmony, and convince sceptics of the immortality of the soul. JOHN C. CALHOUN.'

"This reminds me that, in 1850, at Bridgeport, in the presence of other mediums, among many questions put and answers received, were the following — the answer purporting to come from W. E. Channing.

"*Q.* What do spirits propose to accomplish by these new manifestations?

"*A.* To unite mankind, and to convince sceptical minds of the immortality of 'the soul.'

"The coincidence in sentiment of the answer of J. C. Calhoun and of W. E. Channing, in regard to the object of these manifestations, is remarkable, and worthy of particular notice. The concurrence of two such great minds, whether in or out of the body, on a subject so engrossing, cannot fail to command the attention of every admirer of exalted intellect and moral purity.

"During the above communication of Calhoun, the table moved occasionally, perhaps a foot, first one way and then the other. After the communication closed, we all moved back from the table, from two to four feet, *so that no one touched the table.*

Suddenly the table moved from the position it occupied some three or four feet, rested a few moments, then moved back to its original position. Then it again moved as far the other way, and returned to the place it started from. One side of the table was then raised, and stood for a few moments at an angle of about thirty-five degrees, and then again rested on the floor as usual.

"The table was a large, heavy, round table, at which ten or a dozen persons might be seated at dinner. *During all these movements no person touched the table, nor was any one near it.* After seeing it raised in the manner above mentioned, I had the curiosity to test its weight by raising it myself. I accordingly took my seat by it, placed my hands under the leaf, and exerted as much force as I was capable of in that sitting posture, and I could not raise it a particle from the floor. I then stood up, in the best possible position to exert the greatest force, took hold of the leaf, and still could not raise it with all the strength I could apply. I then requested the three ladies to take hold around the table, and try all together to lift it. We lifted upon it until the leaf and top began to crack, and did not raise it a particle. We then desisted, fearing we should break the table. I then said, 'Will the spirits permit me to raise the table?' I took hold alone, and raised it without difficulty!

"After this the following conversation ensued:

"*Q.* — Can you raise the table entirely from the floor? *A.* Yes.

"*Q.* — Will you raise me with it? *A.* Yes; get me the square table.

"The square table was of cherry, with four legs, — a large-size tea-table. It was brought out, and substituted for the round one. The leaves being raised, I took my seat on the centre; the three ladies sat at the sides and end, their hands and arms resting upon it. This, of course, added to the weight to be raised, namely, my own weight and the weight of the table. Two legs of the table were then raised about six inches from the floor; and then the other two legs were raised to a level of the first, *so that the whole*

table was suspended in the air about six inches above the floor. While thus seated on it, I could feel a gentle, vibratory motion, as if floating in the atmosphere. After being thus suspended in the air for a few moments the table was gently let down again to the floor!

"Some pretend to say that these physical manifestations are made by electricity! I should like to know by what laws of electricity known to us a table is at one time riveted, as it were, to the floor, against all the force that could be exerted to raise it, and at another time raised entirely from the floor with more than two hundred pounds' weight upon it?

"At a subsequent meeting, Calhoun directed me to bring three bells and a guitar. I brought them accordingly. The bells were of different sizes; the largest like a small-sized dinner-bell. He directed a drawer to be put under the square table. I put under a bureau-drawer, bottom side up. He directed the bells to be placed on the drawer. The three ladies and myself were seated at the table, with our hands and arms resting on it. The bells commenced ringing in a sort of chime. Numerous raps were made, as if beating time to a march. The bells continued to ring and to chime in with the beating of time. The time of the march was slow and solemn. It was beautiful and perfect. The most fastidious ear could not detect any discrepancy in it.

"The raps then ceased, and the bells rang violently for several minutes. A bell was then pressed on my foot, my ankle and my knee. This was at different times repeated. Knocks were made *most vehemently* against the under side of the table, so that a large tin candlestick was, by every blow, raised completely from the table by the concussion!

"I afterward examined the under side of the table (which, it will be recollected, was of cherry), and found *indentations* in the wood, made by the end of the handle of the bell, which was tipped with brass. Could electricity make those violent knocks with the handle of the bell, causing indentations, and raising the candlestick from the table at every blow? Or was it done by the same

invisible power that riveted the table to the floor, and again raised it, with all the weight upon it, entirely above the floor ?

" Here the ringing of the bells ceased, and then I felt sensibly and distinctly the impression of a hand on my foot, ankle and knee. These manifestations were several times repeated.

" I was then directed to put the guitar on the drawer. We were all seated, as before, with our hands and arms resting on the table.

" The guitar was touched softly and gently, and gave forth sweet and delicious sounds, like the accompaniment to a beautiful and exquisite piece of music. It then played a sort of symphony in much louder and bolder tones. And, as it played, these harmonious sounds, becoming soft, and sweet, and low, began to recede, and grew fainter and fainter, till they died away on the ear in the distance. Then they returned, and grew louder and louder and nearer, till they were heard again in full and gushing volume as when they commenced.

" I am utterly incapable of giving any adequate idea of the beauty and harmony of this music. I have heard the guitar touched by the most delicate and scientific hands, and heard from it, under such guidance, the most splendid performances. But never did I hear anything that fastened upon the soul like those prophet strains drawn out by an invisible hand from the spirit-world. While listening to it, I was ready to exclaim, in the language of the Bard of Avon,

> ' That strain again, — it had a dying fall;
> O, it came o'er my ear like the sweet south,
> That breathes upon a bank of violets,
> Stealing and giving odor ! '

" After the music had ceased, the following communication was received :

" ' This is my hand that touches you and the guitar.

" ' John C. Calhoun.'

"At another time, the following physical manifestation was made in the presence of Gen. Hamilton, Gen. Waddy Thompson, of South Carolina, and myself: —

"We were directed to place the Bible on a drawer under the table. I placed it there, completely closed. It was a small pocket Bible, with very fine print. Numerous raps were then heard, beating time to 'Hail Columbia,' which had been called for. Soon the sounds began to recede, and grew fainter and fainter, till, like the music of the guitar, they died away in the distance. The alphabet was then called for, and it was spelled out 'Look.' I looked on the drawer, and found the Bible open. I took it up, and carefully kept it open at the place as I found it. On bringing it to the light, I found it open at St. John's gospel, — chapter II. being on the left side, and chapter III. being on the right side. I said, 'Do you wish us to look at chapter II.?' *Ans.* 'No.' 'Do you wish us to look at chapter III.?' *Ans.* 'Yes.' And it was then said, 'Read.' I commenced reading the chapter, and significant and emphatic raps were given at many verses; at 8, 11, 19, 34, *most vehement* raps were given.* By looking at these verses, you will appreciate the significancy and intelligence of this emphatic demonstration. This manifestation purported to come from Calhoun, who had previously invited us three gentlemen to be present at a particular hour.

"In reflecting on the preceding manifestations, one cannot but marvel at the power by which they are made, and the *intelligence* by which that power is directed. And it would seem impossible for one to doubt the source of that intelligence. If, however,

* The verses of Scripture here referred to read as follows: —

Vs. 8. The wind bloweth where it will, and thou hearest its voice, but knowest not whence it cometh and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the spirit.

Vs. 11. Verily, verily, I say unto thee, we speak what we know, and testify what we have seen; and ye receive not our testimony.

Vs. 19. And this is the condemnation, that light has come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil.

Vs. 34. For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God; for God giveth not the spirit by measure.

doubt should still remain on the mind of any one acquainted with similar manifestations, that doubt must be entirely dispelled by the account of the manifestations which follows :

"I was present, by Calhoun's appointment, with the Misses Fox and their mother. We were seated at the table as heretofore, and our hands and arms resting upon it. I was directed to put paper and pencil on the drawer. I placed several sheets of unruled letter-paper, together with a wood pencil, on it. I soon heard the sound of the pencil on the paper. It was then rapped out, 'Get the pencil and sharpen it.' I looked under the table, but did not see the pencil. At length I found it lying diagonally from me, three or four feet from the table. The lead was broken off within the wood. I sharpened it, and again put it on the drawer. Again I heard the sound of the pencil on the paper. On being directed to look at the paper, I discovered pencil marks on each side of the outer sheet, but no writing. Then was received the following communication :

"'The power is not enough to write a sentence. This will show you that I *can* write. If you meet on Friday, precisely at seven, I will write a short sentence. JOHN C. CALHOUN.'

"We met pursuant to appointment; took our seats at the table, our hands and arms resting on it as usual. I placed the paper with my silver-cased pencil on the drawer, and said,

"'My friend, I wish the sentence to be in your own handwriting, so that your friends will recognize it.' He replied, 'You will know the writing.'

"He then said,

"'Have your minds on the spirit of John C. Calhoun.'

"I soon heard a rapid movement of the pencil on the paper, and the rustling of the paper, together with a movement of the drawer. I was then directed to look under the drawer. I looked, and found my pencil outside of the drawer, near my feet, but found no paper on the drawer where I placed it. On raising up

the drawer, I discovered the paper all under it. The sheets were a little deranged, and, on examining, I found on the outside sheet these words :

"'*I'm with you still.*'

"I afterward showed the 'sentence' to Gen. James Hamilton, former Governor of South Carolina, Gen. Waddy Thompson, former Minister to Mexico, Gen. Robt. B. Campbell, late Consul at Havana, together with other intimate friends of Calhoun, and also to one of his sons, all of whom are as well acquainted with his hand-writing as their own, and they all pronounced it to be a perfect *fac-simile* of the hand-writing of John C. Calhoun.

"Gen. Hamilton stated a fact, in connection with this writing, of great significance. He says that Calhoun was in the habit of writing 'I 'm' for 'I am,' and that he has numerous letters from him where the abbreviation is thus used.

"Mrs. Gen. Macomb has stated the same fact to me. She says that her husband, the late Gen. Macomb, has shown to her Calhoun's letters to him, where this abbreviation 'I 'm' was used for 'I am,' and spoke of it as a peculiarity of Calhoun.

"How significant, then, does this fact become! We have not only the most unequivocal testimony to the hand-writing itself, but, lest any sceptic should suggest the possibility of an imitation or a counterfeit, this abbreviation, peculiar to himself, and known only to his most intimate friends, and which no imitator or counterfeiter could know, is introduced by way of putting such a suggestion to flight forever!

"This 'sentence' is perfectly characteristic of Calhoun. It contains his terseness of style and his condensation of thought. It is a text from which volumes might be written. It proves,

"1. The immortality of the soul.

"2. The power of spirits to revisit the earth.

"3. Their ability to communicate with relatives and friends.

"4. The identity of the spirit to all eternity.

"How one's soul expands with these sublime conceptions! How resistless is this testimony of their truth! How surprising that

men can doubt, when this flood of living light is poured upon them by spirits who, in the language of Webster, 'revel in the glory of the eternal light of God.'

"Very truly yours,

"N. P. TALLMADGE.

"MRS. SARAH HELEN WHITMAN, Providence, R. I."

Among the persons who visited the Misses Fox, at Washington, were Prof. Henry and Prof. Page, of the Smithsonian Institute. The former expressed great surprise, on his first visit, that he could not find out the source of the sounds. "IT IS TRUE!" he exclaimed with surprise. He tried several experiments; had the girls stand on a cloak with a silk lining, and, hearing no rapping, concluded it to be electricity, and published in one of the Washington papers a card to that effect.

Prof. Page has since published a pamphlet "exposé," in which he takes the ground that no well-educated man will for a moment suppose the sounds to be electrical; but that it is all sheer fraud and trickery! He is even sure that this is the case, although he did not discover the trick. I shall notice this "exposé" more fully in the Appendix of this book.

From the time of the first investigations in Washington, mediums were developed and the manifestations increased, until, at the present time, the number is as large as at any place of the size in the country. Conferences are held weekly, at which the public have an opportunity to hear and to discuss the subjects involved in the spiritual philosophy. These meetings are generally well attended; often by some of the most eminent men in the country.

Among the mediums developed in Washington are some of a very extraordinary character. The most interesting, as exhibiting the marvellous and the beautiful, are the mediums for producing a variety of drawings, evincing great skill and unprecedented rapidity in their production. The editor of the Spiritual Telegraph,

writing from Washington, under date of March 29th, 1854, gives the following account of some of them:

"I have conversed with seven mediums of this description, five of whom, if I am rightly informed, had not acquired the slightest skill in the art by any previous discipline; but they are all at present employed as passive instruments in the execution of some very curious pictures, which, as the spirits distinctly affirm, are intended to represent the flowers, fruits, &c., of the higher spheres. These pictures do not, in all respects, conform to the accredited rules of art; but it must be conceded that very many of them are well drawn, while the shading is often delicate and beautiful. I am indebted to the persons herein referred to for some interesting specimens of these drawings; and a more explicit reference to particular examples will, I doubt not, interest the numerous readers of the Telegraph.

"Mrs. Amelia J. Williams, of this city, was first made conscious of being influenced by spirits on the third day of February last. While sitting in a circle, the spirits informed her that she would become a writing medium; whereupon she took up a pencil, and a brief communication was written to the effect that she would also be developed as a *drawing* medium. Mrs. Williams had never received any instruction in the use of the pencil, but the invisible artists proceeded at once to redeem their promise. Her hand was freely moved by a foreign intelligent agency, and the immediate results were such as to greatly astonish herself and her friends. Up to yesterday (March 28) — less than eight weeks from the commencement of this interesting experience — her hand was moved to execute not less than *one hundred and twenty pieces*, chiefly plants and flowers, supposed to belong to the spirit-world. They are, for the most part, unlike anything I had seen elsewhere, and very few of them appear to admit of a classification. The style is peculiar, and some of them could only be copied at the cost of much care and labor. The whole of a picture, even when it embodies every variety of shading, is invariably

drawn with *a single pencil*, and so rapidly that the most experienced draughtsman could not equal the facility displayed in the execution. The spirits were requested to give me a drawing of some celestial object; to which they promptly acceded, and in two hours executed the work. The design is quite as curious as the execution was rapid and successful. Mrs. Williams has, moreover, kindly presented me with several additional specimens of her drawings, which I regard as important contributions to my collection. I must not omit to mention in this place that the spirit, who guides the hand of Mrs. Williams, says he was an Italian peasant, and devoted a large portion of his earth-life to the study of botany.

"Charles F., son of Mr. John S. and Mrs. Amelia J. Williams, aged twelve years, also commenced drawing about two months since, and now executes architectural and other pieces in a rapid and apparently careless manner. But Master Charles is most remarkable as a *musical medium*. In the month of January last he was first influenced by a spirit claiming to be *Paganini*. While attempting to perform some simple air on the violin, he was suddenly controlled and went through with the 'Carnival of Venice.' The composition was rendered in a style which required the skill of a master. Since that time he has been impelled to play other difficult pieces, sometimes on a single string, and often with original and exquisite variations. The notes of several birds, and a variety of other sounds, are imitated on the strings of the viol in a most marvellous manner; but the spirit often finds fault with the instrument — which is one of inferior tone — and in several instances has wrenched it from the boy's hands and hurled it across the room. The invisible teacher strenuously insists that Mr. Williams shall purchase a better instrument; and Mr. Williams has at length resolved to comply with the demand of Paganini; which we think is right, especially as the professor *gives* his services in the capacity of teacher.

"Mr. C. Laurie, of this city, became a speaking medium early in January last, and soon after commenced drawing symbolical

pictures. He is not conscious of any mental impression respecting the objects to be represented; but the hand is moved by a power foreign to himself, and with surprising precision. The spirits, through the hand of Mr. Laurie, furnished me with a remarkable specimen, which was elaborated in about three hours. It represents, on a surface less than the size of an ordinary bank-note, a great number of animal forms, together with a variety of other objects, all distinctly drawn, and curiously combined within very narrow limits, yet without the least appearance of confusion. The piece is unique, and a decided curiosity.

"On one occasion, Mr. Laurie, who had never before performed the simplest musical exercise on the piano, was impelled to go to the instrument, when, to his surprise and to the astonishment of his friends, he gave Mozart's Requiem, as we are credibly informed, in an exquisite and masterly manner. Since that time Mr. Laurie has repeatedly tried to summon the invisible agent of this musical inspiration; but his efforts in this direction have been unavailing.

"Mrs. Margaret A. Laurie, wife of the gentleman just referred to, is also a medium for several phases of the spiritual phenomena. She has been subject to visions from childhood. Early in January last she was developed as a drawing medium, since which she continues to draw flowers, &c.; some of the specimens executed under her hand evidently belong to the temperate latitudes of the earth-sphere, while others are not at all familiar, though they appear to have been drawn from objects really existing. I am indebted to Mrs. Laurie for choice specimens, one of which was made visible to her while she was in a trance state, before the drawing was executed. The colors, which were dark green, purple and scarlet, were very brilliant. The piece was commenced and completed in some thirty minutes; and it is believed that few persons experienced in pencil-drawing could copy it in three hours.

"Miss Isabel C. Laurie, daughter of the above-named parties, became a rapping, tipping and writing medium in October last;

subsequently, in the month of March, she commenced drawing celestial landscapes, flowers, and fruits. Miss L. sees spirits when, to all outward appearance, she is in the ordinary state; at other times she is made to improvise both words and music.

"A. F. Cunningham, Esq., who was formerly associated with Theophilus Fisk in the proprietorship and management of the *Old Dominion*, is also numbered among the drawing media. He is by no means one of those passive mortals who do things accidentally; his intellect, naturally vigorous, has been sharpened by his pursuits, and his unusual executive power precludes the supposition that he can be easily controlled. Yet, Mr. Cunningham has been made to yield to the influence of the spirits, and is now almost daily exercised in drawing fruits which are said to grow in the immortal spheres."

I have had the pleasure of examining a large number of these drawings, and can fully endorse all that brother Brittan has stated in regard to their beauty of design and execution. I have also met with Mr. Laurie and his family, and witnessed some of the striking manifestations at his house.

One of the events in the history of spiritual manifestations was the presentation of the following Memorial to the United States Senate, with thirteen thousand signatures attached. The name of ex-governor Tallmadge, of Wisconsin, was at the head of the list:

"A MEMORIAL

"*To the Honorable the Members of the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States, in Congress assembled.*

"Your memorialists, citizens of the Republic of the United States of America, most respectfully beg leave to represent before your honorable body, that certain physical and mental phenomena, of questionable origin and mysterious import, have of late occurred in this country, and in almost all parts of Europe, and that the

same are now so prevalent, especially in the northern, middle and western sections of the Union, as to engross a large share of the public attention. The peculiar nature of the subject to which the memorialists desire to solicit the attention of your honorable body may be inferred from a partial analysis of its phenomenal aspects, which are imperfectly comprehended in the following brief generalization.

"1. An occult force, exhibited in sliding, raising, arresting, holding, suspending and otherwise disturbing, numerous ponderable bodies, apparently in direct opposition to the acknowledged laws of matter, and altogether transcending the accredited powers of the human mind, is manifested to thousands of intelligent and discriminating persons, while the human senses have hitherto failed to detect, to the satisfaction of the public, either the primary or proximate causes of these phenomena.

"2. Lights of various forms and colors, and of different degrees of intensity, appear in dark rooms, where no substances exist which are liable to develop a chemical action or phosphorescent illumination, and in the absence of all the means and instruments whereby electricity is generated or combustion produced.

"3. Another phase of the phenomena which we desire to bring to the notice of your august body, is presented in the variety of sounds which are now extremely frequent in their occurrence, widely diversified in their character, and more or less significant in their import. These consist in part of certain mysterious rappings, which appear to indicate the presence of an invisible intelligence; sounds, such as are occasioned by the prosecution of several mechanical and other occupations, are often heard; there are others which resemble the hoarse voices of the winds and waves, with which occasionally harsh creaking sounds are mingled, similar to those produced by the masts and rigging of a ship while it is laboring in a rough sea. At times powerful concussions occur, not unlike distant thunder or the discharge of artillery, accompanied by an oscillatory movement of surrounding objects,

and, in some instances, by a vibratory or tremulous motion of the floor of the apartment, or, it may be, of the whole house wherein the phenomena occur. On other occasions, harmonic sounds are heard, as of human voices, but more frequently resembling the tones of various musical instruments, among which those of the fife, drum, trumpet, guitar, harp and piano, have been mysteriously and successfully represented, both with and without the instruments, and, in either case, without any apparent human or other visible agency. These phenomena appear to depend, so far as regards the *process* of their production, on the acknowledged principles of acoustics. There is obviously a disturbance of the sensational medium of the auditory nerves, occasioned by an undulatory movement of the air, though by what means these atmospheric undulations are produced does not appear to the satisfaction of acute observers.

"4. All these functions of the human body and mind are often and strangely influenced in what appear to be certain abnormal states of the system, and by causes which are neither adequately defined nor understood. The invisible power frequently interrupts what we are accustomed to denominate the normal operation of the faculties, suspending sensation and the capacity for voluntary motion, checking the circulation of the animal fluids, and reducing the temperature of the limbs and portions of the body to a death-like coldness and rigidity. Indeed, in some instances, respiration is entirely suspended for a season, — it may be for hours or days together, — after which the faculties of the mind and functions of the body are fully restored. It is, moreover, confidently asserted, that these phenomena have been succeeded, in numerous cases, by permanent mental and physical derangement; and it is as positively affirmed and believed that many persons, who were suffering from organic defects, or from protracted and apparently incurable diseases, have been suddenly relieved or entirely renovated by the same mysterious agency.

"It may not be improper to observe, in this connection, that two general hypotheses obtain with respect to the origin of these

remarkable phenomena. The one ascribes them to the power and intelligence of departed spirits, operating on and through the subtile and imponderable elements which pervade and permeate all material forms; and this, it should be observed, accords with the ostensible claims and pretensions of the manifestations themselves. Among those who accept this hypothesis will be found a large number of our fellow-citizens, who are alike distinguished for their moral worth, intellectual powers and attainments, as well as for their eminent social position and political influence. Others, not less distinguished in all the relations of life, reject this conclusion, and entertain the opinion that the acknowledged principles of physics and metaphysics will enable scientific inquirers to account for all the facts in a rational and satisfactory manner. While your memorialists cannot agree on this question, but have honestly arrived at widely different conclusions respecting the probable causes of the phenomena herein described, they beg leave most respectfully to assure your honorable body they nevertheless most cordially concur in the opinion that *the alleged phenomena do really occur*, and that their mysterious origin, peculiar nature and important bearing on the interests of mankind, demand from them a patient, thorough, and scientific investigation.

"It cannot reasonably be denied that the various phenomena to which the memorial refers are likely to produce important and lasting results, permanently affecting the physical condition, mental development and moral character, of a large number of the American people. It is obvious that these occult powers do influence the essential principles of health and life, of thought and action, and hence they may be destined to modify the conditions of our being, the faith and philosophy of the age, and the government of the world. Moreover, deeming it to be intrinsically proper, and, at the same time, strictly compatible with the cardinal objects and essential spirit of our institutions, to address the representatives of the people concerning any and every subject which may be fairly presumed to involve the discovery of new principles, which must or may issue in momentous consequences

to mankind, we, your fellow-citizens, whose names are appended to this memorial, earnestly desire to be heard on this occasion.

"In pursuance, therefore, of the objects contemplated by the present memorialists, and in view of the facts and reasons herein contained or referred to, your fellow-citizens most respectfully petition your honorable body for the appointment of a Scientific Commission, to which this subject shall be referred, and for such an appropriation as shall enable the commissioners to prosecute their inquiries to a successful termination. Believing that the progress of science and the true interests of mankind will be greatly promoted by the proposed investigation, the undersigned venture to indulge the hope that their requests will be approved and sanctioned by the wisdom of your honorable body. And to this end the petitioners will ever pray."

This memorial was presented, by Hon. James Shields, in the month of April, 1854. The following is the reported debate on the occasion :

"*Mr. Shields.* — I beg leave to present to the Senate a petition, with some fifteen thousand names appended to it, upon a very singular and novel subject. The petitioners represent that certain physical and mental phenomena of mysterious import have become so prevalent in this country and Europe as to engross a large share of public attention. A partial analysis of these phenomena attests the existence,

"*First.* Of an occult force, which is exhibited in sliding, raising, arresting, holding, suspending, and otherwise disturbing, ponderable bodies, apparently in direct opposition to the acknowledged laws of matter and transcending the accredited powers of the human mind. [Laughter.]

"*Secondly.* Lights of different degrees of intensity appear in dark rooms, where chemical action or phosphorescent illumination cannot be developed, and where there are no means of generating electricity or of producing combustion.

"*Thirdly.* A variety of sounds, frequent in occurrence, and

diversified in character, and of singular significance and import, consisting of mysterious rapping, indicating the presence of invisible intelligence. Sounds are often heard like those produced by the prosecutor of mechanical operations, like the hoarse murmurs of the winds and waves, mingled with the harsh, creaking noise of the masts and rigging of a ship laboring in a sea. Concussions also occur resembling distant thunder, producing oscillatory movements of surrounding objects, and a tremulous motion of the premises upon which these phenomena occur. Harmonious sounds, as that of human voices, and other sounds, resembling those of the fife, drum, trumpet, &c., have been produced without any visible agency.

"*Fourthly.* All the functions of the human body and mind are influenced in what appear to be certain abnormal states of the system by causes not yet adequately understood or accounted for. The occult force or invisible power frequently interrupts the normal operation of the faculties, suspending sensation and voluntary motion of the body to a deathlike coldness and rigidity, and diseases hitherto considered incurable have been entirely eradicated by this mysterious agency.

"The petitioners proceed to state that two opinions prevail with respect to the origin of these phenomena: one ascribes them to the power and the intelligence of departed spirits operating upon the elements which pervade all material forms; the other rejects this conclusion, and contends that all these results may be accounted for in a rational and satisfactory manner. The memorialists, while thus disagreeing as to the cause, concur in the opinion as to the occurrence, of the alleged phenomena, and, in view of their origin, nature, and bearing upon the interests of mankind, demand for them a patient, rigid, scientific investigation, and request the appointment of a scientific commission for that purpose.

"I have now given a faithful synopsis of this petition, which, however unprecedented in itself, has been prepared with singular ability, presenting the subject with great delicacy and moderation. I make it a rule to present any petition to the Senate

which is respectful in its terms; but, having discharged this duty, I may be permitted to say, that the prevalence of this delusion at this age of the world, among any considerable portion of our citizens, must originate, in my opinion, in a defective system of education, or in a partial derangement of the mental faculties, produced by a diseased condition of the physical organization. I cannot, therefore, believe that it prevails to the extent indicated in this petition. Different ages of the world have had their peculiar delusions. Alchemy occupied the attention of eminent men for several centuries; but there was something sublime in alchemy. The philosopher's stone, or the transmutation of base metals into gold, the *elixir vitæ*, or 'water of life,' which would preserve youth and beauty, and prevent old age, decay and death, were blessings which poor humanity ardently desired, and which alchemy sought to discover by perseverance and piety. Roger Bacon, one of the greatest alchemists and greatest men of the thirteenth century, while searching for the philosopher's stone, discovered the telescope, burning-glasses and gunpowder. The prosecution of that delusion led, therefore, to a number of useful discoveries. In the sixteenth century flourished Cornelius Agrippa, alchemist, astrologer and magician, one of the greatest professors of hermetic philosophy that ever lived. He had all the spirits of the air and demons of the earth under his command. Paulus Jovius says that the devil, in the shape of a large black dog, attended Agrippa wherever he went. Thomas Nash says, at the request of Lord Surry, Erasmus and other learned men, Agrippa called up from the grave several of the great philosophers of antiquity — among others, Tully, whom he caused to re-deliver his celebrated oration for Roscius. To please the Emperor, Charles the Fourth, he summoned King David and King Solomon from the tomb, and the emperor conversed with them long upon the science of government. This was a glorious exhibition of spiritual power compared with the insignificant manifestations of the present day. I will pass over the celebrated Paracelsus, for the purpose of making allusion to an Englishman

with whose veracious history every one ought to make himself acquainted. In the sixteenth century, Dr. Dee made such progress in the talismanic mysteries that he acquired ample power to hold familiar conversation with spirits and angels, and to learn from them all the secrets of the universe. On one occasion the Angel Uriel gave him a black crystal, of a convex form, which he had only to gaze upon intently, and by a strong effort of the will he could summon any spirit he wished to reveal to him the secrets of futurity. Dee, in his veracious diary, says, that one day while he was sitting with Albertus Laski, a Polish nobleman, there seemed to come out of the oratory a spiritual creature, like a pretty girl of seven or nine years of age, with her hair rolled up before and hanging down behind, with a gown of silk of changeable red and green, and with a train; she seemed to play up and down, and to go in and out behind the books, and as she seemed to go between them, the books displaced themselves, and made way for her. This I call a spiritual manifestation of the most interesting and fascinating kind. Even the books felt the fascinating influence of this spiritual creature, for they displaced themselves and made way for her. Edward Kelley, an Irishman, who was present, and who witnessed this beautiful apparition, verifies the doctor's statement; therefore it would be unreasonable to doubt a story so well attested, particularly when the witness was an Irishman. [Laughter.] Doctor Dee was the distinguished favorite of kings and queens — a proof that spiritual science was held in high repute in the good old age of Queen Elizabeth. But of all the professors of occult science, hermetic philosophy, or spiritualism, the Rosicrucians were the most exalted and refined; with them the possession of the philosopher's stone was to be the means of health and happiness, an instrument by which man could command the services of superior beings, control the elements, defy the abstraction of time and space, and acquire the most intimate knowledge of all the secrets of the universe. These were objects worth struggling for. The refined Rosicrucians were utterly disgusted with the coarse, gross, sensual

spirits who had been in communication with man previous to their day; so they decreed the annihilation of them all, and substituted in their stead a race of mild, beautiful and beneficent beings. The spirits of the olden time were a malignant race, and took especial delight in doing mischief; but the new generation is mild and benignant. These spirits, as this petition attests, indulge in the most innocent amusements and harmless recreations, such as sliding, raising, and tipping tables, producing pleasant sounds and variegated lights, and sometimes curing diseases which were previously considered incurable; and for the existence of this simple and benignant race, our petitioners are indebted to the brethren of the rosy cross. Among the modern professors of spiritualism, Cagliostro was the most justly celebrated. In Paris his saloons were thronged with the rich and the noble. To old ladies he sold immortality, and to young ones he sold beauty that would endure for centuries; and his charming countess gained immense wealth by granting attending sylphs to such ladies as were rich enough to pay for their service. The 'Biographe des Contempores' — a work which our present mediums ought to consult with care — says there was hardly a fine lady in Paris, who would not sup with the shade of Lucretius in the apartments of Cagliostro. There was not a military officer who would not discuss the art of war with Alexander, Hannibal, or Cæsar; or an advocate or counsellor who would not argue legal points with the ghost of Cicero. These were spiritual manifestations worth paying for, and all our degenerate mediums would have to hide their diminished heads in the presence of Cagliostro. It would be a curious inquiry to follow this occult science through all its phases of mineral magnetism, animal mesmerism, etc., until we reach the present latest and slowest phase of all spiritual manifestations; but I have said enough to show the truth of Burke's beautiful aphorism: 'The credulity of dupes is as inexhaustible as the invention of knaves.'"

"This speech was listened to with much attention, but frequently interrupted by laughter.

"*Mr. Weller.* — What does the senator propose to do with the petition?

"*Mr. Pettit.* — Let it be referred to the three thousand clergymen. [Laughter.]

"*Mr. Weller.* — I suggest that it be referred to the committee on foreign relations. [Laughter.]

"*Mr. Shields.* — I am willing to agree to the reference.

"*Mr. Weller.* — It may be that we may have to enter into foreign relations with these spirits. [Laughter.] If so, it is a proper subject for the consideration of that committee. It may be necessary to ascertain whether or not Americans, when they leave this world, lose their citizenship. It may be expedient that all these grave questions should be considered by the committee on foreign relations, of which I am an humble member. I move its reference to that committee.

"*Mr. Mason.* — I really think that it has been made manifest, by the honorable senator who has presented the petition, that he has gone further into the subject than any of us, and that his capacity to elucidate it is greater than that of any other senator. I would therefore suggest to him that it should either go to a select committee on his motion, or be referred to the committee on military affairs, of which he is chairman. Certainly the committee of foreign relations have nothing to do with it. Perhaps it would be better to allow the petition to lie on the table.

"*Mr. Shields.* — This is an important subject, and should not be sneered away in this manner. [Laughter.] I was willing to agree to the motion of the senator from California, but I do not wish to send the petition to the committee on foreign relations, unless the chairman of that committee is perfectly satisfied that he can do the subject justice. I had thought of proposing to refer the matter to the committee on post-offices and post-roads, because there may be a possibility of establishing a spiritual telegraph between the material and the spiritual world. [Laughter.]

"*Mr. Mason.* — I move that the petition lie upon the table. Agreed to."

The proceedings in the Senate called forth the following letter from ex-Governor Tallmadge, which appeared in the *National Intelligencer*, on the 18th of April:

"MESSRS. GALES AND SEATON: My attention has been attracted to the proceedings of the Senate, published in the *Intelligencer* of this morning, on the presentation of a memorial by Gen. Shields, signed by myself and thirteen thousand citizens of the United States, on the subject of 'Spiritual Manifestations.' The memorialists ask Congress to appoint a scientific commission to investigate these extraordinary phenomena. Gen. Shields has given a very good synopsis of the memorial; and, had he stopped there, I should not have felt myself called upon for any remarks. But, contrary to my expectations, the general has attempted to ridicule a subject which appealed to his better judgment, and which, according to my understanding, was to receive very different treatment at his hands.

"When I first spoke to Gen. Shields about presenting this memorial to the Senate, he treated it with great courtesy, and expressed his willingness to move its reference to a select committee. Without expressing any opinion in favor of the spiritual theory, he agreed with me that, whether spiritual or philosophical, it was worthy of investigation. After this understanding, I confess my surprise that he should have treated it as he did; that instead of an investigation by a select committee, of which, by parliamentary usage, he would have been chairman, and where those who have investigated the subject could have been heard, he should have given in advance a *rehash* of what has so often been said before by the opponents of spiritualism! My habitual respect for the honorable body of which he is a member will cause me to forego any remarks upon the attempted criticisms of himself and others on this occasion.

"The general is pleased to characterize these manifestations as a 'delusion.' Now, I do not pretend to any extraordinary power to understand a subject more than other men, whose position in life would indicate a talent equal, if not superior, to my own. Still, I do pretend, that, when I have investigated a subject which they have not, I am better capable than they of judging whether there is any 'delusion' involved in the conclusion to which I have arrived, and I cannot consent to surrender my reason and the evidence of my own senses to their instinct. I have made it a rule of my life never to write or speak on a subject about which I knew nothing. That rule has saved me from much awkwardness and embarrassment, as it would also save others were it adopted by them.

"But if it be a 'delusion,' then the greater necessity of investigating it and showing it to be such. I have as great an interest in ascertaining that fact as any other man. If it be 'spiritual,' there is much less necessity for its investigation, because its march will be onward, and no human power can resist it. Do away with the 'delusion,' if it be one, and you do away the insanity which it is sometimes alleged is consequent upon it; and although the honorable gentleman's bill granting lands for insane asylums would still be necessary for the vast numbers rendered such by religious excitement, still they would have fewer inmates by reason of the humane principles adopted by this investigation, namely, of *preventing* instead of *curing* or *palliating* the disease.

"I hope, therefore, that the 'lame and impotent conclusion' to which the Senate arrived, of laying the memorial on the table, may be reconsidered, and that it may receive that consideration which its importance demands.

"Respectfully yours, N. P. Tallmadge.

"Washington, April 18, 1854."

On the day following, General Shields responded briefly, as follows:

"SENATOR SHIELDS IN SELF-VINDICATION.

"WASHINGTON, April 19, 1854.

"TO THE EDITORS OF THE NATIONAL INTELLIGENCER — GENTLEMEN: Hon. N. P. Tallmadge, in his letter in your paper of to-day, does me injustice, which I presume is unintentional. When he requested me to present his petition, I assured him in a few words that I was no believer in 'the spiritual theory,' and, in addition, that I could not see upon what principle it could be either referred to or considered by a select committee. His earnestness on the subject was such as might easily have led him to misunderstand me on this point. I promised to present his petition, and I did so, and then took the liberty of giving my own views upon the subject generally. "Respectfully yours,

"JAMES SHIELDS."

"SECOND LETTER FROM MR. TALLMADGE.

"MESSRS. GALES AND SEATON: The note of Gen. Shields, in the *Intelligencer* of this morning, requires a few remarks from me. He assumes that there was a misunderstanding on my part as to his willingness to move the reference of the memorial to a select committee. Let your readers judge of this from the circumstances in the case.

"The primary object was to have the memorial presented by a senator who would move a select committee, and who, of course, would be chairman of it, and by the very motion would signify his willingness to take charge of it. The subject was peculiarly one for a select committee, because there was no standing committee to which it could be appropriately referred. There was no difficulty in finding a senator who was willing simply to present the memorial. Probably no senator in that honorable body would, on request, have refused an act of courtesy like that; especially when the memorial, to use the honorable gentleman's own language, 'had been prepared with singular ability, presenting the subject with great delicacy and moderation.' The very

object, therefore, was to place it in the hands of a senator who would cheerfully perform that duty. I had spoken to only one senator on the subject, previous to my call on the honorable gentleman. That senator treated the matter with the utmost respect and kindness; agreed that a select committee was the appropriate reference, but that he could not move it, because he would, of course, be chairman, and his other business was so burdensome that it would be impossible to give the subject that attention which it deserved. He then told me he thought Gen. Shields would be the best man to present the memorial and to move the select committee, and that he would no doubt do it.

"It was on the suggestion of this senator that I called on Gen. Shields. Impressed with the importance and the necessity of a select committee, can it be for one moment presumed that I could misunderstand the honorable gentleman, and leave the memorial in his charge, when I knew the great object I had in view could not be accomplished? But the honorable gentleman says he 'could not see upon what principle it could be either referred to or considered by a select committee.' Why, a senator of any experience would, I should suppose, have no doubt or difficulty on that subject. The gentleman, as the proceedings of the Senate show, was willing to have it referred to the committee on foreign relations; and if it was proper to refer it to a standing committee, was it not equally proper to refer it to a select committee? When I say equally proper, I mean so far as a mere reference and a consideration of the subject were concerned. What are the objects of a select committee? They are two. First, where the subject, although appropriate to a standing committee, is of that magnitude and importance to require the more deliberate and thorough investigation of a select committee, which is burdened with no other reference, and in the constitution of which the talent of the body best suited to the investigation may be combined; secondly, where the subject is not appropriate to a standing committee, but is peculiarly appropriate to a select committee. A memorial, therefore, coming within either of the objects mentioned, can ap-

propriately be referred to a select committee. The memorial under consideration came within the latter. If, then, it was proper to refer it to a standing committee, to which the honorable gentleman very willingly agreed, it was equally proper to refer it to a select committee. From this conclusion there is no escape. Any doubt as to the power of Congress to grant the prayer of the memorialists in *any* case, is no objection to referring the memorial itself either to a standing or a select committee, because the committee can more deliberately examine and judge of that power than the body itself can on the hasty view taken of it on a mere motion of reference. On the coming in of the report of the committee, then, is the time to discuss the question of power.

"The clear understanding, therefore, on my part, was that Gen. Shields would present the memorial and move its reference to a select committee. How could I understand it otherwise, when that was the very object of the application to him? Any other conclusion would make me stultify myself. Neither can any unprejudiced mind, in this view of the case, come to any other conclusion. The honorable gentleman, therefore, must be laboring under some strange hallucination on this subject; more strange, indeed, than the 'delusion' under which he, with so much delicacy and self-complacency, supposed these memorialists were laboring, because they had come to a conclusion different from his own on a subject which, from thorough investigation, they were presumed to understand, and which, for want of investigation, he was presumed to know nothing about!

"But, again, if the honorable gentleman did not intend to move the select committee, why did he not indicate that intention in a manner that could not be misunderstood? He knew perfectly well, or ought to have known, that the select committee was the great object I had in view; and can he suppose that I would have placed the memorial in his hands, if I could have imagined that it was to receive the treatment it did? Most assuredly not. Some two weeks elapsed between the time of delivering the memo-

rial to him, and its presentation by him to the Senate. During this time I saw him twice; the last time was on Thursday evening preceding the Monday on which the memorial was presented. If he had made up his mind that he could not move a select committee, but should feel bound to present his views against it, why did he not so inform me, and suggest that I place the memorial in other hands? That is the course I should have pursued if I had been occupying, as I did for many years, a seat in that honorable body. Was not such a course due to me? And, above all, was not such a course due to himself? Instead of that, and instead of pondering over these extraordinary phenomena set forth in the memorial, the most extraordinary in the history of the world, and which philosophy and science might have been proud to investigate, he seems to have been turning over the pages of some cyclopædia to find materials for the luminious exhibition which he made before the Senate!

"This is not all. The honorable gentleman was not content to present his views in a grave and serious manner, becoming the subject, but he attempted to ridicule, not only the subject, but those who had memorialized Congress in relation to it. The result will show whether the attempted ridicule will fall on them or react on himself. I will only add, that there are names on that memorial which do not shrink in comparison with any member of the honorable Senate, — names that have adorned the bar, the bench and the Senate-chamber; names of the hardy sons of toil, whose brawny hands and stalwart arms have been thus fashioned by the industrial pursuits of life; names the representatives of two millions of believers in the United States; names of those 'who know their rights, and, knowing, dare maintain' them. These memorialists, and those whom they represent, are not only entitled to respect, but they will command it. They are not to be put aside by any attempt to minister to a prejudiced public sentiment. This question is to be fairly met. The days of imposture and delusion, in relation to it, have gone by; the honorable gentleman will no longer be able to protect himself by that senseless cry; and when

he again has occasion to quote Burke's beautiful aphorism, as he terms it, that 'the credulity of dupes is as inexhaustible as the invention of knaves,' he may find in it a more extended application than he at first supposed. Respectfully yours,

"N. P. TALLMADGE.

"Washington, April 20, 1854."

Thus ended the first attempt to get a "scientific commission" appointed for the investigation of this subject, and the discussion it called forth. It was not, at that time, popular enough to get an advocate in the Senate, although some of that body knew that there was more in it than Gen. Shields or any of the body could account for. It is not probable that any of the memorialists expected more favorable treatment than they received. The carpenters and fishermen of the world are the ones to investigate new truths, and make senates and crowns believe and respect them. It is in vain to look for the reception or respect of new truths by men in high places.

CHAPTER XVI.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS ON THE SPIRITUAL MANIFESTATIONS AND THE PROGRESS OF SPIRITUALISM.

In the foregoing chapters I have made a record of some of the early manifestations of the spirits within the last six years. I have not intended to bring the history down to very recent cases in the several localities treated of in different chapters. To note the rise and progress of spiritualism in all the cities and towns of the United States, with a mere glance at the facts and occurrences, would make, of itself, a library of respectable size. But, in the first struggle to introduce it into the places mentioned, when it was not only a novelty, but a thing "everywhere spoken against," there were occurrences and trials which should be given to the world, to be read by future generations. The struggle has been brief; but the opposition as bitter as any new theory or facts ever encountered. That bitterness has been restrained by the more enlightened and liberal laws growing out of the progress of mankind, which, but a few generations back, would have subjected all engaged in the promulgation of the new truths to cruel torture and to death. That age has gone by, never to return, unless civilization relaxes again into barbarism. But there are various ways in which persecution may be carried on without fire and fagot, while its effects are almost as severe. I have seen men's business prospects blighted, and their families made to suffer, because they would not deny facts they had witnessed. I have seen men of high moral worth, sound health, vigorous minds, capable, honest, and trustworthy, refused employment because they were

spiritualists, and the avowal made boldly that that was the sole cause of the refusal. I have heard the character of persons, male and female, traduced in the pulpit, the lecture-room, and the drawing-room, because they could give a substantial reason for the hope that was in them, and because that reason and hope differed from the majority. More than this; men have been seized, kidnapped, and conveyed to distant states, and incarcerated in lunatic asylums, and their property as nearly confiscated as grasping relatives could make it, for no other reason than that they believed in spiritualism. Women have been declared insane, and taken from their homes, when their insanity consisted in a knowledge beyond the majority around them. These are some of the appliances now used to force conformity to the popular belief, and they appear to the enlightened mind as decidedly an outrage on the moral sense of this age, as savage for the present time, as the fagot and the "cat" were for the days in which they were used. This opposition is disappearing before the onward march of all powerful facts, which have so repeatedly occurred that they cannot be disputed. The angry and baffled theological dogmatists have become silent, save an occasional growl at the rapid spread of what they deem to be the great heresy of the age, but which threatens to overwhelm their castles which stand on a sandy foundation. In some parts of the country the belief in tangible spirit evidences has become so general that all excitement is past. From this circumstance some of the opponents imagine that it has "died out," mistaking the quiet of conviction for the loss of all interest in the subject.

It would not be expected that, from the multitude of sects and opinions that have characterized the individuals who have investigated and embraced the truths of spiritualism, they would be perfectly harmonious in their views. Accordingly, they represent a great variety of opinions in theology and philosophy. Every shade of belief that characterized men before they became spiritualists tinges their new faith. They have only added a proof of immortality to their theology, or philosophy, whatever it

happened to be. The new manifestations cannot be said to have established any new theology, for the reason that no two spirits seem to agree as to what is the truth, any more than two mortals. The only thing, it seems, really learned by the spirits thus far, is, that man is IMMORTAL — that spirits can communicate with those left in the flesh, and that, by patient waiting and examination, we may yet be brought into closer communication and approximate nearer the truth. I am aware that persons are not wanting who declare that they have found the truth, and that good and enlightened spirits have confirmed all the views they promulgate. Here we are confused by a knowledge that various conflicting views are declared to emanate from the same high authority, even as old theological disputants declare that theirs is the true faith, and that no other has the sanction of the Bible. Already, in many localities, different divisions of spiritualists have exhibited not a little of that bitterness of feeling which has ever disgusted sensible men with the contending religions of all times.

Two general divisions are already seen among the spiritualists of our day. They may be characterized, in brief, as Bible and anti-Bible. Perhaps these terms do not sufficiently define what they are, but it is certain that one division are quite free to apply to the other anti-Bible, and that too in a way to imply reproach. They apply it to all persons who do not admit that a ray of infallible inspiration runs through the Bible, from one end to the other, and illumines every page. To believe that the Bible contains great beauty, truth, inspiration — records of wonderful and beautiful manifestations of spiritual power, interference, admonition, and warning — that the sublime precepts therein contained have never been improved upon by all the progress of ages, and may never be, because truth is one and eternal; and, at the same time, that many things contained in it are records of vice, corruption, sensuality, and sin, and that the pretended commands of God to commit certain acts of abominations, had their origin in the savage and inhuman customs of Jewish kings and patriarchal libertines, rather than in any being possessed of goodness, purity,

and wisdom; — to think thus, I say, subjects the ones entertaining such opinions to the charge of infidel and "anti-Bible," from another portion of spiritualists; while some who entertain these latter views look upon those who, educated from infancy to place unbounded confidence in the authority of the Bible, have not changed their opinions, nor seen any reason to do so on embracing spiritualism, as bigots and extremely anti-progressive. These are the two extremes, between which all intermediate grades may be found which blend into each other so closely as to be hardly distinguishable. As in most other things, this intermediate class forms the liberal and tolerant one in the new doctrine. Doubtless, spiritualism will modify the theology of the world, and, by degrees, work an entire change in the religious opinions of Christendom and the whole world. It has, undoubtedly, a tendency to liberalize and enlighten, and to bring together all minds on the one point of immortality. Thus united on one subject, so long enveloped in doubt and darkness, it will, almost of necessity, produce, ultimately, more harmony than has heretofore existed in the liberal world. It is probable, too, that spirits will also improve on the mode of communication, which will give us more proofs of identity, and enable us to more clearly understand what they wish to convey to us. Now, as before stated, spirits confirm, or seem to, all the various opinions of individuals, except on some of the more tangible part of spirit existence. On the subject of the existence of a great first cause we have no new proofs or revelations. The probability is that spirits generally know but little, if any, more about how, where, or in what form the Deity exists, than we mortals. I see nothing in the new revelations that would, of necessity, lead an atheist to change his views. The most confirmed atheist may believe in immortality and be a refined spiritualist. More than this, he can get his views sanctioned by spirits as readily as the most devout believer in any of the thousand forms in which popular theology has clothed the Author of Nature. The anthropomorphism of the Jews, and most professing Christians, and the pantheism of the admirers of nature as God,

may all find spirits — good spirits, too — to agree with them. I say good spirits, for I would not sanction the folly of condemning spirits or men either for a difference of opinion, especially where no positive, tangible proof could be produced. Spiritualists, of all others, should avoid this imitation of venerable (by time) and gray-haired bigotry.

In the fanaticism which follows naturally where a certain class of minds embrace a new truth in morals, religion, or social science, it is not strange that practices, which do not show the good and purifying effects of their new conversion, should be found. In all new social agitations and movements especially, is there a tendency on the part of a class to make it responsible for teaching whatever their former inclination leads them to. Thus we have a class of spiritualists — or, more properly speaking, a few individuals — who seek to make spiritualism responsible for the doctrine and practice of what is known as Free Love — a philosophy originating in religious fanaticism before modern spiritualism was known. The same class of minds have followed in the footsteps of all new and exciting social movements. If any one reads the history of almost any new religious party, they will find the theory of spiritual-wifeism with it. The Second Adventists, Perfectionists, Mormons and Spiritualists, are not alone followed by them. With the Mormons they triumphed; with the others they have fallen into disrepute, and mostly died out or separated from the main body. The action of these few persons should not be allowed to condemn any whole body with whom some of their opinions are identical. They feed on excitement. Religious excitement begets excitements of a different nature, and it follows in the wake of revivals and camp-meetings as readily as in other popular agitations. There are too many examples of this to attempt, at this late day, to fasten it on spiritualism as a common belief or a result of their particular theory. Just now an attempt is being made to identify spiritualism with this theory of religious libertinism, and many of the editors of the country are horrified at it; and some of them, while they meet in social circles, and hail as

their friends the great writers in favor of this free-love doctrine, recognizing them as part of the *literati* of New York, and worthy to associate with their wives, daughters and families. Let such cease to countenance the chiefs of "modern times" and the "Soft-downs," — who publish papers and write books, and, under the name of physiology and philosophy, openly advocate the abrogation of marriage; or, still worse, the violation of the marriage obligation at the pleasure of either of the parties, and for the time being, — before they undertake to condemn a whole body of people — numbering two millions — on account of the theory or practice of a mere handful of the disciples of a Lazarus, a James, an Andrews or a Nichols.

In the preceding pages I have glanced at the different phases as they came up in different localities. As the remarks apply to a very early period in most of the places, some of the different forms were not noticed at length. Most of the present readers know what they are. They do not vary in different localities. In most of the early cases the first intimations the mediums had were from the sounds and rappings, and moving of furniture without any person being in contact with it. The table-moving, assembling around it and placing the hands upon it, was not known until nearly or quite four years after the first demonstrations. Previous to that, all the moving was done without contact; and it must be admitted that the movements, under such circumstances, gave much less chance for suspicion. After the rapping and moving, followed pointing out the letters on a card by the involuntary movement of mediums' hand. Then came writing, speaking, drawing, painting, and various other forms. Many ways need the strictest scrutiny, as it is difficult to detect which is spiritual and which an emanation from the mind of the medium. This is particularly the case with writing and speaking. So much can be done by the human mind without the aid of spirits, when in certain peculiar conditions, that it is not safe to say that spirits are writing or speaking, without the most positive proofs. Such proofs have been abundant, and the tests satisfactory to thousands.

Still, much self-deception exists in regard to mediumship, and through this many have been deceived, and many, seeing no proof of spiritual power, have left the investigations in disgust, unwilling to spend their time where assertions were given instead of proof, and where a nervous action was claimed to be the work of spirits out of the flesh. Let none be deceived by mistaken mediums. The more common the belief in spiritualism becomes, the more danger of taking for granted without proof. "Try the spirits" and the mediums too. Let no false delicacy prevent any reasonable test. Let us never have the mortification of being believers on insufficient evidence; for we are often called upon to state the facts of our experience. Let it be such that it cannot be doubted!

APPENDIX.

THE CONTROVERSY OF SPIRITUALISM.

EARLY COMMENTS OF THE PRESS.

In the previous part of this work I have had occasion, incidentally, to speak of the opposition encountered from the time the spiritual manifestations were first made public. It was very briefly noticed when the rappings first commenced in Hydesville, by *The Wayne County Democrat*, published at Newark, two miles from the residence of the Fox family. I never saw the notice, and think it was not copied by the press elsewhere. After the removal of the girls to Rochester, there was but little said of it, other than an occasional paragraph by the way of ridiculing the idea of anything spiritual. For many months this was all the information to be had on that subject through the newspapers.

During Catharine Fox's visit to Auburn, in the summer of 1849, the *Auburn Daily Advertiser* attacked, with great virulence, all who had anything to do with investigating the subject. As mentioned in a former chapter, that paper first attempted to prevent an investigation by publishing the falsehood that old Mr. Fox had been detected in making it by machinery. This charge was answered by Mr. H. D. Barron, who was a boarder in the house where Catharine was visiting, and knew the charges to be false. Considerable discussion was carried on for a few days, but the gross unfairness of the editor disgusted the friends, and all prospect of a fair hearing in that quarter was abandoned. A small paper, edited by Thurlow W. Brown, called the *Daily Bulletin*, also had a few paragraphs of attempted wit on the subject, but made no attempt to impeach the honesty of persons engaged in the investigation. The *Rochester Daily News*, edited by John W. Hurn, noticed the controversy going on in Auburn, and spoke very fairly on the subject.

The first articles, explaining at length the facts, as far as they had then transpired, were written by the author of this work, and published, in three letters, in the *Boston Chronotype*, in the month of July, 1849. The first letter was introduced by Mr. Wright, the editor, by the following paragraph:

"The Other World. — The following letter, from a highly respectable source, gives the details of an affair which is beginning to get notoriety through the newspapers in Central New York. The writer refers us to a large number of gentlemen, most of whom are well known to us as men of intelligence and void of superstition, as witnesses of the singular noises of which he speaks. What theory will finally be confirmed by the facts, — whether that of mesmerism and clairvoyance, or that of Swedenborg, or that of the extreme liability of the senses to illusion, — we cannot distinctly predict. But the popular excitement already existing brings the subject fairly within our newspaper range, and we thank our correspondent for his communication. It is a blessed thought that nobody will be hanged for these noises, and we trust nobody will be seriously frightened."

The letters briefly set forth the facts and actual occurrences, up to the time they were written, — the commencement with the Fox family; its progress in Rochester, Auburn, and other places, and quoted largely from the memoirs of the Wesley family, to show that the same occurrences were known in that family, and that Dr. Adam Clarke endorsed the narrative in that case, and added that he had frequently been cognizant of similar facts in other places and different families. They also briefly alluded to the several theories which were thus early advanced to account for the phenomena, such as ventriloquism, machinery, electro-magnetism, &c.

The articles were extensively noticed and commented upon, generally in the spirit of ridicule and derision, unless by some member of the religious press, who gravely pronounced it blasphemy.

Very little real discussion was called out until the public investigation in Rochester, in November, 1849. The first notice of those meetings was as follows:

"Wonderful Phenomena, at Corinthian Hall, on Wednesday Evening, Nov. 14. — The citizens of Rochester will have an opportu-

nity of hearing a full explanation of the nature and history of the '*mysterious noises*' supposed to be *supernatural*, which have caused so much excitement in this city and other places for the last two years. The whole directions, in regard to bringing it before the public, have been given by these 'mysterious agencies,' and they have promised to give the public an actual demonstration of the sounds, so that they may know that they are neither made nor controlled by human beings. Let the citizens of Rochester embrace this opportunity of investigating the whole matter, and see if those engaged in laying it before the public are deceived, or are deceiving others, and if neither, account for these truly wonderful manifestations. After the lecture, a committee of *five persons* may be chosen by the audience to select any respectable and convenient room in the city, where the next day may be devoted to an examination of these manifestations, and report at the next evening's lecture whether there is collusion or deception. *Come and investigate.*"

The *Rochester Daily Advertiser* gave the following notice of the call for the meeting:

"Something New and Mysterious. — It will be seen, by reference to our advertising columns, that Corinthian Hall is this evening to be the theatre of very new and startling developments, or the exposure of one of the most cunningly-devised and long-continued impositions ever practised in this or any other community.

"There are but few persons in this city who have not heard of the 'mysterious rappings,' although they have given heed to it only as 'an idle tale, such as nurses frighten babes withal.' Some of the 'believers' have been 'directed by these agencies' to expose it to a public audience at Corinthian Hall, and offer very fair chances for giving the matter a candid investigation. We hope our citizens will embrace the present opportunity of testing it, and exposing the fraud, if it be one, and if not be satisfied what it is.

"Whatever may be the facts in the case, there is certainly an appearance of candor on the part of those who bring it before the public."

The proceedings at the meeting, and the comments, to some extent, I have given in the chapter on Rochester, and need not repeat it in this

place. After the committees had failed to detect fraud, and so reported, the press in different parts of the country commenced a discussion — or generally an attack — on the subject. Some of these I propose to put on record for the purpose of showing how the advent of what now appears to be of great importance was received.

From the *Rochester Evening News :*

"Mr. Editor : — With your permission I would like to say a few words about the ghosts that have so startled our citizens from their propriety for a few nights past In the first place, I would say that I have no faith whatever in the 'spiritual manifestations,' as they are called; for I believe that those who have played their parts on the stage of mortality have more important offices to perform than rapping on the floor in answer to questions which the inquirers know more about than all the ghosts that people the invisible world. If they be spirits, and have power to move tables and perform other feats in mechanics, and desire that the community should know this, why do they not display said power in the public hall, so as to be seen and heard of all men? This would settle the question forever, and if it can be done I would like to see it.

"But, whether such things can be performed or not, I have no doubt whatever of the honesty of the parties concerned, and believe that the phenomena is a new fact in natural philosophy that deserves and demands the attention of scientific men. This is no common humbug, as the reports of the various committees testify, and I consider the conduct of the well-dressed rowdies who thronged the hall on Saturday night a disgrace to our city. Men of good standing in society, *Majors* and minors, acted as if they had never been in a civilized meeting before. I should not have been surprised at this if a cheat had been discovered and exposed; but I had no idea that a *suspicion* of fraud, which if true is of small consequence, would induce men who claim to be respectable to act towards women in an indecent and unmanly manner. T. H. R."

From the *Advent Harbinger* (second advent), Nov. 24, 1849 :

"Our city is all excitement about the mysterious rapping of the professed ghosts of the dead, of which we spoke some months since. But little has been heard of the matter for some time past, until a few

days since it was announced that public lectures, in one of the most spacious halls in the city, were to be given on the 'wonderful phenomena.'

"Large numbers have attended, — lectures have been given, — the rappings have been heard by all. Committees of men of the highest standing have been appointed by the audience to solve the mystery; but, as yet, their investigations have been in vain: they cannot tell from whence the noise comes, nor how it is made. And it is no marvel that they cannot, for the Bible is not their guide in this matter. Would they look into that neglected book, the mystery would at once be solved. They would learn that this spirit, which seems principally to be an associate of certain women, is of the same character of the *familiar spirits* so frequently spoken of and condemned in the Bible. The character and works of those, and of this, or these, are similar; near enough alike to be of the same origin — viz., of the devil.

"Should the matter continue to spread, which it doubtless will (for this age of immortal soulism, belief in departed ghosts or spirits of the dead, a want of faith in the plain word of the Lord, and of mysticism, is rife for just such things), then we may speak more in detail of this matter.

"We most sincerely entreat all not to give heed to this 'seducing spirit and doctrine of devils,' which it teaches, but cleave to the word of the Lord, hear his voice, and follow him, and all will be well. But every other way leads down to the dark chambers of death."

In a very short time communications began to appear from different quarters, giving well-authenticated accounts of rapping and other manifestations, at different periods, which had remained a secret, fearing the popular ridicule, until the public meetings and the investigations at Rochester encouraged them to speak out. A great mass of facts soon came to light, by which people were made aware that these were not entirely new manifestations.

In the following February the first pamphlet history appeared.* The facts contained in this little work gave a new impulse to the discussion. The *Tribune* (New York) gave it a review of over two columns in small type, and a very candid notice, considering the times and the immense minority it was placed in by even allowing such a

* Capron & Barron, Auburn, N. Y.

matter a fair hearing. Other papers of New York city were most vehement in its denunciation. The same day that the New York *Express* published a notice of the pamphlet, it also published the following "expose:"

"THE ROCHESTER SPIRITS. — We have referred in our literary notices to various noises heard at Rochester, N. Y., and attributed to supernatural causes. In the New York *Scientific American* we find the following very plausible, very plain, and very simple explanation:

"'*Supernatural Knocking.* — A "knocking at the door" at nights, which has alarmed the good people of Rochester, who attributed it to spiritual agency, is explained in the *American Journal of Science*, by Professor Loomis, as the effect of the vibration of a dam over which the water falls. Professor Loomis describes this vibrating as producing sounds like a loud knocking on the doors and walls of buildings, and gives a particular account of the phenomena as observed at the dams of Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio; East Windsor, Connecticut; Springfield, Massachusetts; Northampton, Massachusetts; Gardiner, Maine; and Hartford, Connecticut. He attributes the vibrations to the friction of the running water which falls over the dam, and shows how these sounds are transmitted to a distance by the earth, and produce that sudden and alarming knocking sound in dwellings. Professor Loomis has pointed out very simple and easy methods of checking this vibratory action in the dams; and the people of Rochester, who have been troubled by an invisible spirit, will find it easily exorcised by mechanical means.'

"'O philosophy and common sense, ye play the devil with theories!' said one of the snarlers of the days of the Encyclopedia."

The beauty of this was that Professor Loomis never uttered a word in regard to it. The article in relation to vibrations from water-falls was written years before, and was seized upon by the editors, who thought they could use it for this purpose. The *Express* was easily misled and hoaxed in regard to this matter. It received every theory that came along, and called it an "Explosion of the Rochester Knockings." This was about the first; then it was taken in by the knee-pan theory; then the toe-snapping, then electricity, and several other theories, and it endorsed them each as *the* explanation.

OPINIONS OF PROFESSOR DEWEY, OF ROCHESTER.

Professor Dewey, of Rochester, is to be added to the long list of learned men who gravely and quietly annihilated the whole phenomena. He did it, through the columns of the Rochester *Advertiser*, by taking Professor Loomis' dam theory, and adding his own theory of fraud, and that only as far as the Fox family were concerned. His cool and abusive letter was as follows :

" Mysterious Knockings. — It is not wonderful that these *knockings* attract attention from those at a distance. Here, they are too well understood to interest any but the credulous and the lovers of the marvellous. The *three sisters*, who perform to the amazement and delight of distant admirers, succeed admirably in keeping up the deception and gaining money from their visitors. True, they do not *ask* anything, but how can they refuse the money of one polite enough to pay for their time employed for their pleasure.

" In volume 45 of *Silliman's Journal*, Professor Loomis has given a statement of the effects of *vibrating dams* on the houses in their vicinity. The facts presented by Prof. L. are very curious, but not very rare, as he gives *seven cases*, and they are scattered over the country. Many more could be mentioned. He proves that the *dams vibrate from the friction of the running water*, and that the variations depend upon accidental and obvious causes. At Springfield, Mass., *the stone breast-work vibrates*.

" But *the knockings* are not dependent on any such cause, but on the *voluntary efforts* of bodies that are moved by the spirit in them, like all cases of human action. They move about with the three sisters to any part of the city, when the water in the river is high or low, cold or warm, running over the dams and falls or not. The *unbelievers* present are often sent out, as the *spirit* cannot perform in their presence. The *gullible* find ample satisfaction, and some of them pay handsomely.

" It might be proper for the respectable papers in New York, Boston, &c., which have excited so much attention over the country, to give the true view of the case, and the general opinion of the intelligent citizens of Rochester in respect to this deception. C. D."

This was replied to, the next day, by another correspondent, as follows :

"The Mysterious Rappings. — Your correspondent, C. D., admits that the theory of Professor Loomis, viz., 'the vibrations produced by water-falls,' does not explain the mysterious sounds heard in this city and vicinity. Any person who has heard these sounds must be aware that no such theory can explain them, for the obvious reason that the sounds are controlled by *intelligence*. There are evidences of intellect governing these sounds too strong to be resisted. *How* are the sounds made, and by *what mind* are they controlled? These are the questions that many 'incredulous' persons, and who are *not* 'lovers of the marvellous,' would like to have C. D. answer satisfactorily. True, he asserts that 'the three sisters, who perform to the amusement and delight of distant admirers, succeed admirably in keeping up the deception;' but this is mere assertion, — let us have the proof. The assertions of 'so learned a Theban' as C. D. will not pass for proof in this case. If this 'deception' is 'too well understood *here* to interest any but the credulous,' C. D. owes it to the community that have cherished him, sustained him, and painted his portrait, to explain the deception and put a stop to the delusion.

"C. D. says the sounds 'move about to any part of the city with the three sisters.' The same intelligent sounds have been heard here when the 'three sisters' were not in the city, and are by no means confined to their presence. I have heard intelligent replies (by sounds) to questions when neither of the 'three sisters' were present. The general opinion of the *intelligent* citizens of Rochester may be that these sounds are a 'deception;' — so much the greater need that the ignorant and credulous should be enlightened by those by whom the deception is 'well understood.' Many very honest, conscientious and pious people believe these sounds are produced by inhabitants of the *spiritual world*. Let the learned savans who arrogate exclusive knowledge of *spiritual* affairs, and are too disinterested (of course) to ask or receive money for *their* spiritual ministrations, show that the spirits they profess to believe in cannot commune with mortals, — exist at too remote a point to know aught of human affairs, — or are too intangible to produce a concussion that may vibrate upon the human ear.

"A. B."

DR. LANGWORTHY AMENDS HIS REPORT.

On one of the committees of investigation at Rochester was a young doctor by the name of Langworthy. He was exceedingly chagrined

at being forced to acknowledge his total inability to find out the cause of the sounds, and being obliged to report to the audience that they were satisfied that the sounds were not made by the girls. (See report of committees in Chap. IV.)

Fearing his popularity might be injured, or being ridiculed by some friend who wrote to him, he wrote a letter to an acquaintance in Michigan, which was published in various papers, as follows:

"'The committee appointed to inquire into the matter came to the conclusion to test the affair by placing the girls to whom the knocking was always concomitant upon a table, and at the same time placing their hands (the committee's) on the young ladies' feet. Strange to say, whether animal magnetism were the cause or not, the knocking uniformly ceased, or rather, did not begin. A similar effect was produced by tying a band around that portion of the ladies' dresses which corresponds with gentlemen's inexpressibles. There was not the slightest doubt that if the young women had been examined by 'a jury of matrons,' and *sans culottes*, all would have been explained in the most satisfactory manner. The committee were, however, all men, and could not administer *in extremis*. A report to this effect was made to fifteen hundred citizens of Rochester, in public meeting, the result of which was the last public appearance of the supernaturals.' It is however said that there are still persons who have a faith in the matter, and that at a certain domicil in Troup-street, — a rather suspicious neighborhood, if we remember correctly, — the knocking, with various other entertainments, is regularly repeated. Professor Loomis, it will be remembered, accounted for these noises by stating that it seemed to be a vibratory sound produced by the rush of water over a mill-dam; but Mr. Langworthy is entitled to the palm. If this account be true, sundry of the mysticists of the day should be turned over to the care of Dogberry, or some as sensible custodian of the public morals and peace."

By turning to the report, the reader will see that there was a committee of ladies who disrobed the two girls, and that this fact alone should be sufficient to answer his statements. Instead of his reporting to an audience of fifteen hundred, there were but *two hundred and eighty* persons in the hall the night his report were made, — which report was favorable to the girls, he saying, with his own mouth, that

"it could not be made by machinery." The real fact was that Dr. L. wrote to his friend, not expecting to be placed in the awkward position he was, by having it published; but men seldom run a long career in trying to maintain two positions entirely opposite without exposure.

JOHN W. HURN.

In the months of January and February, 1850, a number of articles from the pen of John W. Hurn (then of Rochester) were published in the New York *Tribune*, in which he attacked the character of media, and all persons who had any connection with them. The chief points assumed were, that the sounds were electrical, and under the control of the media; or that they were in some way connected with animal magnetism and clairvoyance. He averred that none but clairvoyants were mediums; — that the Fox girls never could get the sounds when they were completely isolated from the floor; — that the moving of tables, and all phenomena commonly known as physical manifestations, *never* occurred unless in the dark, and therefrom drew the inference of fraud; — that the "spirit claimed to know, at all times and seasons, what persons are thinking, writing, or doing, — what their names are, — how many children they have, — how many are dead, — whether they are single or married, — and how old they are." He then declares that nine times out of ten the answers are false, so far as his own experience is concerned; and concludes thus:

"In conclusion, I would remark that although there are some circumstances connected with the subject which cannot be explained by any recognized laws of physiology or philosophy, yet the great preponderance goes to prove the whole affair, from beginning to end, the most miserable imposition ever attempted to be palmed off upon a civilized community.

"There is prima facie evidence of fraud in the fact that when anything more than knocking is done, all daylight, or candle-light, is excluded, and even the cracks of doors stuffed with rags."

In this same letter he affirms that he *knew* of frauds practised by the media at the very time he was investigating and pretending to believe it. In a subsequent letter he declared that he had entered into a league with the Fox girls to procure some peculiar ink for the girls to

write on the wall, and have it appear after a short time. He also stated that he agreed to write for them, under pretence that it was spirits, to hand to some "victim;" and agreed to hit some persons on the head, to make them believe it was done by spirits. I have been informed by the Fox family that Hurn did offer to procure a writing compound, as he described, and that the offer was looked upon as a joke, and never noticed further, or attempted or expected to be put in execution.

These letters were answered by the author and by Mr. George Willets, reviewing each point of his statements, and contradicting the ungenerous insinuations, or bold charges of fraud, against the Fox family. At that time, all the vague statements of Mr. Hurn were readily retailed out by the press, which generally took sides with any rumor or unfounded assertion, if it were only in opposition to the spirituality of the manifestations.

REV. DR. POTTS CRACKS HIS TOES.

In the winter of 1850, Rev. Dr. Potts delivered a lecture before a literary association in Rochester, and there broached the toe-joint theory. He stood upon the stage in Corinthian Hall and cracked his toes, to the great delight of his literary audience. This, he gravely contended, was the explanation of the "Rochester Rapping." He was the first one who publicly exhibited that theory, and should not be robbed of the honor by a more noisy ex-Rev. in the person of C. C. Burr, who afterwards caught the idea, and lectured through the country to establish the truth of it.

THE ROCHESTER DAILY AMERICAN.

About this time, the *Rochester Daily American*, edited by Alexander Mann, published an editorial article of two columns' length, the first it had written of any length on the subject. The editor evidently thought it time that he should have a "leader" on the subject, and record his wisdom, before he was in rear of all his brother editors. So he commences thus:

"It is no part of our purpose to show, by argument, that the 'mysterious knocking' is not a spiritual manifestation. Those who could

require reasoning upon such a subject are in a state of mind which renders them impregnable to logic. They are best left to the operations of returning common sense. We have not witnessed the knocking. We have not visited the house, or any place where it is heard. It was impossible for us to recognize any obligation to 'investigate' a thing of this sort before pronouncing it an imposture. Any obloquy which we may thus have incurred at the hands of believers is easily borne, in comparison with the reflection that we could, even for a moment, have supposed such preposterous nonsense the result of spiritual agency, or a revelation from the unseen world."

Mr. Mann closed his long and extremely wise article in the following profound manner:

"We may be asked how it is that so many people believe in the spirituality of the 'knocking.' *We wish we could give a satisfactory answer.* That so large a portion of the community have suffered themselves to be humbugged, is more wonderful than any of the spirits' pretended performances. Something is due to the fact that some respectable gentlemen consented to act as a committee to witness the wonder. True, they did not profess any faith, but the mere connection of their names with the affair gave it a consequence which they neither intended nor expected. Journals at a distance, by treating with a show of respect the absurd pretensions of the 'ghost,' have done still more to mislead the public. BUT THE RACE OF THE GHOST IS NEARLY RUN. There must be a limit to credulity, and we think it is almost reached."

Time has already shown how true a prophet held the place of editor of the *American;* but he has the consolation of knowing that he erred with the majority.

NEW YORK COMMERCIAL ADVERTISER.

Here is the grave opinion of the editor of the New York *Commercial Advertiser:*

"THOSE ROCHESTER KNOCKINGS. — We perceive that a gentleman is in town lecturing on divers matters of inscrutable physiology, and en-

deavoring to establish some connection between them and the 'rappings' of the pretended spirits at Rochester, available for a satisfactory explanation of the latter. We are satisfied that, so far as the rappings are concerned, the gentleman may spare himself the trouble of discoursing on the subject. We have had a long and instructive conversation with a gentleman of intelligence, from the vicinity of Rochester, who has taken some trouble to acquaint himself with the facts of those mysterious rappings, since they have been so much talked of; and his account makes it perfectly clear to our minds that the mystery is not only an imposture, but a very clumsy one, — indebted for its success, so far, entirely to the credulity of the auditors and spectators who are impressed by it. We say *entirely* to the credulity, *for the clumsiness of the imposture is actually so great, there is so little art in the means adopted to avert detection, that people have literally to shut their eyes to avoid seeing.* (*!!*)

"The only point in which there is any successful trick is the manner by which the rapping is effected. It is easy enough to see, if people do not wilfully shut their eyes, that the girls effect the rapping *somehow*. For instance, if they are prevented from placing themselves in close proximity to a door, a table, a piano, or some other object to rap on, the rapping very soon ceases; — 'the spirits will not communicate any longer.' As for the moving of the table, *anybody can see how that is done;* in fact, persons have been heard to acknowledge that *they* did it to carry on the joke. A slight impulse with the foot gives a movement to the table, which runs, *very* easily, on rollers; and as the spectators are required to gather close round the table when it is to be moved, nothing can be easier than for one of them to give it a start with an imperceptible push merely of the toe of his boot. As for the other mysteries, — the hands applied to the faces, the playing of musical instruments, taking combs out of ladies' hair, &c., — these are all done in the *dark*. Of course it is easy to conceive who are the actors.

"A sufficient explanation of the whole humbug is supplied by the fact that money is made by it, and that the money is shared by a considerable number of persons. *The three girls and their mother are believed to be in receipt of from fifty to one hundred dollars per diem from visitors. As they themselves say, the thing works very well. Mr. Capron, who is or was a journeyman printer, sells his pamphlet as fast as it can be supplied.* A young man, who officiates in some sort as director or manager of the girls, has talked quite freely about coming to New

York with them, and making an engagement with 'Barnum,' saying that they could get fifty dollars each per week, but that they could do better than that, perhaps, by staying at Rochester.

"In short, we are entirely satisfied, as we were in part by the letter in the *Boston Transcript*, that the mystery is a mere trick; and we have no doubt that the girls could easily be induced, by a sufficient offer, to own up the whole story, and tell how they have managed their part of the imposture."

I immediately wrote to the editor of this journal to contradict the falsehoods. I informed him that I was not a printer, and had never set a line of type in my life; and that this would probably satisfy the public as to the reliability of his information. This statement he refused to publish, and never did contradict the falsehood. Such was the fairness of a journal that claims to be the organ of piety and commerce in the city of New York.

MAJOR M. M. NOAH.

Major M. M. Noah, of the *Sunday Times*, announced that "the wonder-swallowers must find new food for their credulity, for the Rochester mystery is exploded." The major has passed to the world of spirits, and his name is forgotten by the great mass of those who knew him; yet that which he pronounced "exploded" has overspread the civilized world, and is daily gaining converts. What a comment on the short-sightedness of man!

NORTHERN CHRISTIAN ADVOCATE.

The *Northern Christian Advocate*, published at Auburn, N. Y., one of the organs of the Methodist Episcopal Church, assailed all who had anything to do with the investigation, in the following malicious article:

"For the information of several friends at a distance, who have written to us to know about the strange noises which are heard in this city, we would say that we know nothing of the matter. Not being overstocked with gullibility, and having very little taste for the low marvels which furnish entertainment to some people, we have left the

thing to take care of itself. The class of persons who chiefly deal in these mysteries — we mean the juggling, sight-seeing, and sceptical — makes all inquiry into the subject disgusting to a firm believer in revelation. It has been reported, for a few months past, that there are mysterious rappings at two or three places in town; but whether these noises are natural or supernatural is unknown, except to the coterie of initiated wonder-workers. These affirm that, through their familiars, they have quite a ready access to the spiritual world, holding converse with Wesley, Swedenborg, Paul, and other great names among the departed; which is certainly a consolation, as the persons in question have very little intercourse with people of respectability in this world. We are pleased if they keep better company elsewhere.

"The question, by itself, is one of gravest import. While we repel Mormonism in all its phases, and treat with merited contempt the profane mockeries of vulgar impostors, we acknowledge that a candid examination is due to whatever has any just claims to a supernatural character. The Scriptures are full on the point. No one can deny the possibility of our being visited by inhabitants of the invisible state. The abstract possibility of such a thing, however, does not authorize us to lay aside our senses, and receive, as veritable communications from above or below, all that may be foisted upon us by the arts of deception. Both good and evil spirits have access to this lower world, and doubtless have much to do with the actions of men; but their influence is ordinarily disguised; they act upon our being, through the agency of another, as Satan did through the serpent, when he tempted Eve. They may act independently of all such agencies, and in that case we can only judge of their presence by the absence of other known or imaginable causes. We are to 'try the spirits,' — that is, bring their character and pretensions to an unequivocal test, that we may not be the victims of human ignorance or Satanic artifice. If these knockings continue among us long enough to enlist a little more intelligence than has hitherto scanned them, the public will very likely be satisfied of their true character. We have thus far believed it to be sheer imposture, not worth going a rod to see, nor deserving the slightest notice from the press. Our principal reason for this opinion is, the extreme imbecility of everything connected with these revelations, and this, whether we consider the revelations themselves or the persons to whom they are made. The devil is not a fool, and if he is really the author — a fact we are not disposed to question —

of these strange communications, we imagine there is some intervening agency to share with him the guilt of such silly falsehoods.

"We have now pretty fully declared our sentiments, and shall not further trouble the reader, except it be to assure him that if there is any new light shed upon this mysterious subject, he shall be early apprized of the fact."

Rev. A. H. Jervis, a Methodist clergyman of Rochester, wrote an answer and sent to this *Christian* Advocate; but his brother ministers refused to let him defend himself in their columns. It appeared in the *Cayuga Chief*, published at the same place. It was as follows:

"Rochester, February 18th, 1850.

"Mr. Editor:—In your 46th No., for Feb. 13th, while looking over your valuable paper, I notice a caption, '*The Mysterious Knockings.*' On reading the article thereto appended, several points seemed to me to need, and even demand, some further notice, by way of candid reply. Now, Mr. Editor, and brother minister, let me ask, with all due respect, would not that honesty which is always the best policy, when you were inquired of by your *distant friends* concerning a subject which in your first sentence you say you 'know nothing of,' have prompted you to have directed their anxious inquiries after knowledge and truth to those who do know and are able to satisfy them by incontestable facts? By your voluntary and honest assertion of your entire ignorance of the whole matter, perhaps your reflecting 'distant inquiring friends' will fully appreciate all you have said in your after remarks. But is it honorable to use all your sagacity and strength of mind to prejudice your friends against—you know not what—whether good or evil—and to thus assail the characters of your fellow-citizens and Christian brethren, because they happen to be in possession of positive facts where you are willingly ignorant? You say those who have investigated this matter are 'juggling and sceptical.' It is easy to ridicule what you have no knowledge of, or argument to meet; but facts are stubborn things, and we may as well be willing to meet them first as last, for meet them we must.

"You next affirm that the *coterie*, or club society, have professed to hold converse with the spirits of those whose names were respected in this world. At this you are pleased, as they are persons who hold no respectable fellowship with society of the living. Now, I shall only

speak for one in this matter, as I know for myself, and not another, what have been my principles in choosing my associates. I have chosen, for *thirty-three years*, to be a member of the *Methodist Episcopal Church*, and for *thirty years* have held the relation of a *minister* in said church; and when I look at the list of names composing the publishing committee of your paper, I see the first, third, fourth and fifth are among the men with whom I have enjoyed the warmest friendship and Christian sympathy, and I cannot now think they are men of little respectability in the world; but still they are fallible, and may err in some points, but this does not destroy my regard and love for them. Again, it is stated that none who are engaged in this matter believe in the Scriptures, which are full on the point that the invisible inhabitants of the spirit-world have communicated with men on earth. At that I rejoice, for in that connection you enforce the duty to *try the spirits*. Yes, *I* say try the spirits, whether in the body or out of the body; but how can we try them if we would not go a rod to ascertain the fact whether we may enjoy the blessed privilege of holding sweet communion with the saints in light, and our dear departed friends who may be sent forth as ministering spirits, to minister to us, if we are resolved to be heirs of salvation?

"Next, the *imbecility* of those engaged in the investigation of this subject has heretofore been your reason for not employing the press in scattering light on this matter; but you hesitate not to employ the press, a tremendous engine, to assail *character*. Now, if the Rev. editor means to call us weak-minded who have examined for ourselves, and know what we have seen, and felt, and heard, and think the evidence of our senses and judgment may be depended upon, I, for one, am willing to be considered such by him. If an honest inquiry as to what are my privileges here, and what my destiny hereafter, incur the charge of imbecility, I would ask the clerical gentleman if he considers all weak-minded whom he may have been instrumental in persuading to look into spiritual matters?

"In conclusion, I have been enjoying the best opportunity for calmly investigating, for almost two years, in company with judges, lawyers, doctors, and citizens of all professions and callings, as well as ministers and members of different churches, and infidels, of course, — for many of them have seemed to give the matter a more careful investigation than some rigid sectarians, — and the result has been salutary in many

instances.* I say, after all this privilege, and the positive knowledge I have, I am far, very far, from calling all '*sheer imposture.*'

"I do not wish the editor to construe anything I have written as unkind or unfriendly; for even the angel, when conversing with a wrangling spirit, said, 'The Lord rebuke thee.'

"ASAHEL H. JERVIS."

In speaking of a slight criticism on the course of that paper, which appeared in the second edition of the first history, this Christian Advocate made the following conclusive paragraph:

"It is a thankless task to meddle with this rickety supernaturalism, as it seems to imply a sort of temerity. Many no doubt think it as presumptuous to speak freely of these bald impostures as they would to speak thus of the Bible, not remembering that the pretensions of the one are as different from the other as heaven is from hell. The disguises of infidelity are to be torn off, however reluctant those may be who wear them. These spirits have too much corporeity about them, — *the spell is not well laid, — the trick is a failure.* The authors may sell another thousand of their Revelations, but the work will soon be as dead as the Univercœlum, or mesmeric revelations of A. J. Davis. It has ever been the policy of Satan to disparage the true revelation, by means of his own lying wonders. 'We are not ignorant of his devices.' The game is not new. Infidelity is at the bottom of this matter. Let our friends beware."

This was written in 1849, and it is presumed that the editor is very much astonished that that which he pronounced a "rickety supernaturalism" only five years before, should now have over a million of believers, and become a theme of discussion in all the civilized world. It is a curious comment on the want of foresight among those who assume to be the religious guides of the age.

AUBURN DAILY ADVERTISER.

About the same time that the above appeared, the *Auburn Daily Advertiser* declared that "The mystery had pretty much ceased to

* "I could write a volume of facts, but facts are not what you seem now to desire. You wish to wait until others have made it popular for you to fall in the rear and receive them."

excite an interest in the minds of the few who have heretofore inclined to the belief that the noises were produced by a supernatural agency." The editor then announces himself a convert to the science of *toe-ology*.

REV. JOHN M. AUSTIN.

On the 27th of March, 1850, Rev. John M. Austin, a Universalist clergyman of Auburn (now editor of the *Christian Ambassador*), wrote a letter to the *Tribune*, which that paper headed "A Settler," putting himself on record, in regard to the matter. He had been three times to hear the sounds, and received no satisfactory answers to his questions, although some of the spirits claimed to be apostles and prophets. On this small experience, it is no marvel that the testimony of so distinguished a man should be taken negatively against all the positive facts that had been or could be stated by those who had investigated for two years nearly every day. Mr. Austin treated the subject very candidly, presenting a strange contrast to his more orthodox brethren of the cloth. Of the believers in the spirituality of the manifestations, he says: "This class is comparatively small in numbers. It is composed of persons of the various religious sects, and some who sympathize with no denomination. To the extent of my knowledge, they are an intelligent, upright and worthy class of people. I have no doubt of their perfect sincerity; nor do I believe they would be guilty of deception, or any dishonorable means, to propagate their views." He was about the first, or, so far as I am acquainted, the very first, opponent appearing in the public prints, who gave the friends of the unpopular truths any credit for honesty. He then states the particulars of the three interviews, and concludes by stating that he does not pretend to know what produces the sounds, but thinks it quite possible that they may be made by human agency, either through electricity, clairvoyance, or some other manner. He further says: "Faithfulness to the public, however, compels me to add, that I have been repeatedly informed, by those whose veracity I cannot doubt, that there have been, and still are, persons in Auburn, who, without any movement the eye can detect, can make all these knockings with the cracking of the toe joints." He expresses a hope that he may be satisfied that spirits of the departed can communicate with mortals, and promises that he will make a frank avowal of it when convinced. As

he has not yet made the avowal, it is probable that he still remains in ignorance of the fact.

His letter was answered by the author of this volume, giving a statement of many facts, and naming witnesses to undisputed proofs of intelligence beyond any of the auditors, and showing the impossibility of any such phenomena being produced by clairvoyance or electricity.

POSITION OF THE TRIBUNE.

The reader will have observed, in several parts of this work, that the New York *Tribune* has been noticed as giving more space to the discussion of this subject than any other paper. As Mr. Greeley is one of the best abused men in the country, his enemies were glad to seize upon his exhibition of fairness in this matter, and put him down as a full believer, and an "advocate for the rappers." This was not true at any time during the first two years after the discussion commenced; nor is it true, so far as I am informed, up to the present time, that he endorses the *spirituality* of the phenomena. Very soon after its commencement at Auburn, I received a letter from Mr. Greeley, making inquiries in regard to it. From that time, a correspondence was kept up for two years or more, and his opinions were well known to me. He was not, I repeat, a believer in the spiritual theory. He was puzzled by the facts he had witnessed. At times he was staggered by some startling occurrence in his own family (when a medium was present), and then perplexed by the want of candor and truth he would discover in some medium. Without ever admitting the spiritual hypothesis, he was ever willing and anxious to get important facts, and let the public weigh them with himself. I make this statement here because I knew his position at that time, and knew that the charge of a too-ready credence to the claims of a spiritual intercourse was not true. I have never known a man, who had the same amount of evidence, to be so far from admitting what I conceive to be their true origin. His accusers were too anxious to make a case against him, to state his position fairly.

ANKLE-SNAPPERS.

From the snapping of toes, in Auburn, in the vain attempt to imitate the "rapping," a clergyman of Rochester, knowing that the toes

could not perform all that was claimed and proved of the spirits, elevated the theory to the ankle joints; and that had its brief run through the press, as the Simon Pure explanation.

JOHN STANLEY GRIMES.

The next great champion of material mysticism that appeared in public was John Stanley Grimes, an itinerant lecturer, and exhibiter of phrenology, magnetism, psychology, &c. &c. His communications appeared in the *Tribune*. He details several interviews with mediums. His first statement was in regard to an interview "in one of the principal cities of western New York." The gist of his second letter (his first had no point) was the following fabricated story of his visit to the house of a Mr. Benedict, of Auburn:

"In the course of the conversation one of the company mentioned that the hostess was a clairvoyant subject, and when mesmerized she could look into the spirit-world, and hold converse with its inhabitants. I therefore proposed to mesmerize her and try her powers. After some hesitation she consented, and was soon apparently asleep. I asked her if she was asleep. She said Yes. I asked her if she could look into the spirit-world. She said Yes. A great many questions were now put to her, most of which she answered with great ingenuity. But it was evident to me that the whole performance was a deception. I requested the company to leave the room a few moments, to give me an opportunity to make inquiries concerning some important private matters, which I wished to be kept secret. As soon as the company were gone, I said to the pretended sleeper, — 'I did not wish to expose you to the company, nor to injure your feelings; but mesmerism is a subject that I am familiar with, and of course you cannot deceive me. Now, if you will own up to me frankly, I will not expose you to the company, nor to the citizens; but if you do not, I shall explain the whole farce, not only in private but in my public lectures. I will admit that you have performed your part with wonderful adroitness and skill, — but don't carry the joke any further.' After a moment's silence, she acknowledged that it was all deception — that she was not susceptible to the mesmeric influence in any degree — that the knockings were made by various mechanical tricks, and by the aid of three confederates, one of whom was a young woman who lived at the

next house, and the other two were young men, her cousins. The knocking on the middle of the floor was caused by a board under the floor, poised like a lever, and so arranged that when she stood near the window she could step upon a peg, which was connected with one end of the lever, and cause the other end to rise and knock against the middle of the floor.

"The knocking on the table was produced in several ways; sometimes by one of the confederates, who had his hand or foot under the table, but in most instances it was done by a deception which is similar to that often practised by ventriloquists, — thus, the company, all sitting or standing around the table, expecting a sound to proceed from it, will, most of them, believe that the sound actually does proceed from the table, although, in reality, it is produced by the rapping of a finger against a chair several feet from the table. If the leading persons present were shrewd and sceptical, and manifested a disposition to scrutinize the proceedings too closely, the plan was for the spirits to refuse to answer until they were gone and their places supplied by auditors of a more credulous character. I asked the woman what induced her first to attempt such a deception. She said she had become acquainted with the women who practised the same deception in Rochester, and had learned the art from them. On her return home she tried her own skill, and succeeded perfectly. Her success astonished no one as much as herself. She declared that the credulity of so many sensible people was to her a matter of amazement. She had no idea at first of deceiving any one, except her own family circle, and intended, after having amused herself sufficiently, to explain to them how it was done; but the very first experiment roused the whole neighborhood, and in a few days she found herself in such a position that she could not explain without disgrace, and she was, therefore, obliged to keep up the farce as well as she could."

His third letter commenced as follows:

"A neat, well-written pamphlet upon this subject has been published in this city, the authors of which, Messrs. Capron & Barron, reside in Auburn. According to these statements, it would seem to be impossible for any man of common sense to give the matter a fair investigation without being convinced.

"A few months ago I happened to be in Auburn, and made the

acquaintance of these gentlemen ; and among many other courtesies for which I have to thank them, I enjoyed the privilege of being present with a small and select party, to witness the exhibition of the knockings. I asked a number of questions, and tested the spirits in the manner in which I was directed ; but I did not receive a single correct answer, and I was fully convinced that the knockings were made sometimes by one of the ladies, and at others by one of the gentlemen present, whose characters ought to have been a sufficient guarantee against such a miserable artifice. Hundred of intelligent persons in Auburn were, however, converted by the same kind of evidence which seemed to me to be utterly worthless."

During the whole controversy nothing was ever uttered more maliciously false than these extracts. When these letters appeared, I was editing the Providence *Daily Mirror*, and took immediate occasion to put the seal of falsehood upon so much as is related in the above extracts. In regard to the confession of the sounds being made by "mechanical tricks" by Mrs. Benedict (for he means no other place, she being the only medium besides Mrs. Tamlin, then in Auburn), with boards under the floor of the house, I know that it was not so, for the floor was repeatedly searched by honest but sceptical men. A more potent fact is one well known by the neighbors, that, let Mrs. B. go to any other house, and the sounds were the same. The story of the board and the peg was nothing more nor less than gross fabrication, — falsehood invented by —— some one. If any such confession was ever made, it was under the influence of that very mesmeric sympathy of which Mr. Grimes says so much. Equally unfortunate was the following falsehood : "She said she had become acquainted with the women who practised the same deception in Rochester, and had learned the art of them." A great "art," truly, to stick a peg in the floor, and place a board so that it could be moved! The very absurdity of the statement stamped it with falsehood. But I have something still stronger. Up to the time of that visit of Grimes, Mrs. Benedict had never seen one of the Fox family ("the women of Rochester" spoken of), nor had they any knowledge of her. This I know. I think they never have met even to this day.

In regard to the insinuation contained in the second extract, I will only give the statement of Mr. Henry D. Barron, then a student in

the Law School at Ballston Spa, N. Y. He wrote to the *Tribune*, under date of July 15, 1850, as follows:

"In the summer of last year, a friend in Auburn informed me that *Professor* John Stanley Grimes wished to see me. I accordingly called upon him, when he informed me that I was familiar with a matter with which he would like to become acquainted, and he would like to have me accompany him to the house where 'those mysterious sounds' were heard. This I readily consented to do, being assured by my friend that Mr. Grimes was a man of science, truth and honesty, which I had no reason *then* to doubt, having never seen or been acquainted with him before. Upon our arrival at the house, we found the lady (Mrs. Tamlin) and Mr. and Mrs. Capron there. We sat down to a table, as is customary on such occasions, and the sounds first directed me to 'ask questions,' which I accordingly did. The question was then asked if a spirit would converse with Mr. Grimes. The answer was that it would. He then asked several questions, which were answered by a rapping purporting to be that of the spirit of his wife, each one of us being ignorant of the fact that he had lost a wife, until he informed us that such was the case. After several times asking the sounds mentally to rap the number he thought of, he informed us that a part of the time the answers were correct. Mr. Capron then proposed that they take several pieces of money from their pockets, in their closed hands, and ask the sounds to rap the number of pieces in their hand. This was done, and several times correctly and several times incorrectly. This I *know* to be true, as I counted the raps and then the pieces. After these tests, and after some conversation upon various subjects, Mr. Grimes rose to go, said he was much interested, and asked permission to call again.

"This is the *only* interview that Mr. Grimes ever had with these sounds in the presence of 'Messrs. Capron and Barron.' For the truth of my statement, I refer to Mrs. Tamlin, and Mr. and Mrs. Capron, whose characters, where they are known, stand as high as he who has played priest, doctor, lawyer, and lecturer on mesmerism and phrenology, all for something more than '*one dollar*,' which seems to be the 'knock-down argument' against the honesty of the Fox family in his mind. I leave the public to compare the two statements of the matter, and then decide whether the arguments are for or against the truth of these manifestations.

"At Auburn Mr. Grimes met Mr. Capron and myself several times before his return, but never frankly told us that he thought one of us made these sounds; and the only evidence of scepticism that I remember of his evincing was in the assertion he made to an individual while there, which was in about these words: '*I can whip all of the spirits through hell that have ever rapped in Auburn.*'

"In a previous number of the *Daily Tribune*, Mr. Grimes gives an account of a visit to another family in Auburn, in whose presence the sounds were heard. I am informed, by a person of truth, that Mr. Grimes *did* visit another family, for the purpose of hearing the rapping, while in Auburn. Concerning the wonderful discoveries he there made, I shall speak in another letter.

"Amidst the calumny and foul abuse heaped upon my friends and myself during the investigation of these developments, I have troubled the public with but one defence of the matter, and only then when the character of an absent friend was assailed from a source that demanded the reply. I have wished only for calm, cool investigation, knowing that, if false, time would expose it; and if true, God would preserve and defend it. Had Mr. Grimes' statement been published in some common *Switch* or other *Herald* of falsehood, I should not have considered it my duty to notice it; but the respectability and influence of the journal in which his letters have appeared have been considered sufficient reason to call forth this true statement of the matter.

"Your friend, H. D. Barron."

The articles of Mr. Grimes were replied to at length by William Fishbough, who stated the chief facts narrated above, and successfully answered the various theories advanced by him.

THE NEW YORK EXPRESS.

The *New York Express*, commenting on the discussions on the subject, profoundly and piously says:

"That a pretext so preposterous as that the soul of a human being, gone to its account, can be called back to hold communion with the living, should be boldly made and confidently believed in, in these days of intellectual enlightenment, would surprise us more than it does, if it were not that there exists among us a latitudinarian fashion of view-

ing things hitherto inculcated and deemed sacred — the crying sin, as we hold, of the times we live in. Socialism in science, laxity in religious belief, easy credence of the marvellous, combine to form a very common class in these latter days; — men and women, 'with itching ears,' prone to receive every new postulate as an axiom; and always, like the Athenians in the time of Paul, inquiring, 'Who will show us some new thing?' * * * * * * * * *

"That the exposition of the trick by which the pretenders to communion with the other world, now playing their game in this city, continue to delude their dupes will, one day or other, be made as effectually as in the case of a hundred other such attempts at deception, we have not the least doubt."

All this the editor of the *Express* writes, to introduce an elaborate treatise on *finger-snapping*, by an anonymous correspondent, who contends that this is the chief mode of making the "rapping." He also gave a long dissertation on acoustics, to account for the sounds appearing in different parts of the room.

T. S. ARTHUR.

T. S. Arthur, in his *Home Gazette*, puts himself on record, as follows:

"We believe that the 'spiritual rappings,' so fashionable just now, are but consequences growing out of the weak, foolish, and often insane practice of mesmerism, which has so widely prevailed in this country during the last few years. The 'rappings' are a lower, more sensible and tangible, manifestation of the elements at work in animal magnetism, and they startle and mystify just in proportion as men are ignorant of the laws that govern the spiritual world. As we believe that no positive good can come from the practice of mesmerism in any form, so do we believe that no good can result to any one from intercourse with these rapping spirits. All wise men will let them alone.

"As to the many things alleged to be done in actual space, we do not believe a word. A spirit cannot infringe upon matter in the least degree. It cannot appear to the natural eye, nor speak to the natural ear, nor touch a natural object. Either the movement of articles said to have occurred, and the sounds heard, were the result of mortal

agencies, or the articles did not really move in space, nor did the sounds really vibrate in our natural atmosphere."

Such is the bold assurance of one of the popular writers of our times, who speaks without any knowledge of the facts whatever. He is as wide of the truth in asserting that animal magnetism has done no good, as when he makes his dogmatical assertion in regard to articles moving and sounds being heard.

THE BOSTON INVESTIGATOR.

Among the opposing papers, none in the country were more uncandid than that class known as the religious press, and among these I include the *Boston Investigator*. True, this is generally called an Infidel paper; but the religion of annihilation is the great object and purpose of the *Investigator*. It is in sympathy with the other religious extreme represented by the *New York Observer*. The great difference between the two is, that while the *Observer* does not pretend to reason, the *Investigator* is generally a reasoning paper. The repeated attacks of the *Investigator* on the spiritualists induced the author to address the following letter to the editors of that paper, which was published, with the comments annexed:

"Spirits and Spiritual Manifestations. — *Mr. Editor:* Were it not for the fact that your paper is devoted to the diffusion of universal mental liberty, and that you acknowledge the fact that free discussion is the most powerful means to be employed for such diffusion, I should not write you on a subject upon which you and I differ so widely, while agreeing on almost every other. I will say, however, that I am not what may be properly called a believer; for you know I bear the reputation, quite extensively, of being a most decided and heretical unbeliever. What I say about the fact of what is commonly called — although very improperly — the mysterious or Rochester knockings, I do not pretend to believe, *but I know*. It is a matter of just as absolute knowledge as that I now hold a pen in my hand; and one is no more a psychological effect than the other.

"I will make all due allowance for the false education and the gross superstition and entire want of good reasoning in all observers who think that because an ancient book, or a set of bigoted book-

worshippers declare that something can be nothing and nothing something, that it therefore must be so. This man of straw, set up by bigots, and believed in by men calling themselves liberal, it is easy to demolish, — much easier than to meet facts candidly and fairly, especially when they clash with some dear and long-cherished superstition, religious or anti-religious (for there are both).

"What, then, do the believers in, or the *knowers* in, the 'mysterious' noises mean by the word *spirit?* Of course, I cannot speak for all; but I venture to assert that I speak the sentiments of a vast majority when I say that they are entirely and wholly materialists in their ideas and rationalistic in their opinions. They have come to their present views of the matter by actual facts, and not by any favorable notions of the superstition so long fastened upon mankind by misguided and designing religionists. These persons can well afford to be called honest but deluded people by the surface observers who do not wish to penetrate beyond a preconceived opinion. The absolute superior knowledge they have of these things renders them so well established in the facts that no casual observer can move them, however many men of straw he may demolish. The word spirit is used by them to denote an absolute, material existence, and this nine out of ten of the writers in its favor have distinctly declared. They do not contend for an existence that is — *nothing;* and the benevolent soul who volunteers to enlighten these 'honest and well-meaning persons' loses his labor entirely, as many others equally ignorant of what they were talking about have done. I pity this 'gullible' class, who are so apt to think all persons ignorant and superstitious who differ from them, and that they are just the ones to enlighten them.

"The whole question turns upon the point of whether there is any part of man which survives his present visible existence. Having satisfied myself on this point by actual demonstration, and by no other means, that some part does survive, I shall not argue that point, but simply say that this part is what I call spirit. Not a nonentity, but an actual living, breathing, thinking being, — more refined in organization, more expanded in intellect, and professing more power than before, both mental and physical. This is what I, and a majority of those who have investigated the 'rappings,' understand by spirit. I can see no likeness to the nothing and something spirit of the religionists in this. Most truly it is intangible to us in our normal state. So are the myriads of animals we eat, drink and breathe. The fact that

we cannot see them is no argument against their existence. There is nothing of the *super*natural wherewith to dislodge us here. The most that can be done is to ridicule and assert, of which arguments the *Investigator* has made ample use on this subject, having no clearer weapon to oppose to something that strikes at a cherished dogma. This continued existence of man is governed by the same laws, immutable in nature, which govern the whole universe. There are no such existences as *super*natural ones. Nature produces all things, wherever or however they may exist. None of the senses are destroyed by this refining process. They exist in a more perfect state. They have a superior mental power, and it requires no very great stretch of the imagination to suppose, especially if you have had the positive evidence that some have, that superior mental beings can use the ingredients of the atmosphere to make up forms out of the elements of which our bodies are formed by a little more roundabout process, and to let that combination be felt and heard by man when under certain circumstances which permit such a communication. The same degree of mentality could produce sounds in various places by the use of the electrical ingredients of the atmosphere by which they are surrounded. We contend for nothing 'mysterious' in this, and ask no sympathy from casual and ignorant observers. These believers, or rather knowers, in the facts of the spiritual sounds never did pretend or believe that something can come of nothing; and I here ask any man or woman, who, through ignorance or prejudice, has made such false assertions, to show where it is done, and whom by. It is false so far as my experience goes, and I claim to have had a good deal of experience on the subject. Nor do I expect to be dislodged from my position by the vain speculation and surmises of those who are entirely ignorant of the facts in the case. There is no pretension to anything miraculous in these sounds. Nothing of the kind. It has been the great objection on behalf of our religious brethren that we did not admit it to be miraculous or supernatural, and they have called us stubborn infidels. We are between two fires, both of the *firers* agreeing most cordially in denouncing us as fools or knaves. Strange to say, the ultra-Christians and the ultra-Infidels are bedfellows in this matter, and both equally candid. Both try to show that spirits are immaterial, and cannot operate on material things. The theology of both is touched in its tenderest points; the religionists, because it strips the mystery from around the next sphere of existence, and makes priests useless; and

the infidels because many of them had firmly set their stake to the point that man had no kind of existence beyond this visible sphere. Our knowledge that it is all material, but beyond our vision, nettles the annihilationist, for he could get along, and make it appear as ridiculous as he pleased, if we only held to immateriality.

"When facts too strong to be otherwise disposed of have been brought up, biology, psychology, or some other *ology*, is thought of to account for them. That will not do. The person has not yet been found that could produce this effect on a miscellaneous audience of four hundred persons, or fifty, or twenty persons; yet these sounds have been distinctly heard by audiences of all these numbers. Besides, it is a very easy matter for persons to decide whether they are biologized when a table moves against them. Let them try the experiment of moving away from it, and let it follow them, having chalked the floor, and then call in all the persons from another room to see whether the furniture stands in its original place. I am for very material experiments, and have tried them enough to know how utterly and entirely the biological and mesmeric theory fails in accounting for the occurrences.

"But, some surface-skimming observer will say, 'If there are *spirits*, they can as well communicate with me as anybody.' Well, sir, that is your assertion, and has no more proof than the rest of your surmises. If you will prove yourself to be of precisely the same electrical condition of the one or two hundred people in whose presence these things are heard and seen, you can be believed, and not without. It is a very foolish assertion. Spirits use means and natural laws as we do, and can only use such channels of communication as come within the law. You or I may not be in that state. There is a wide difference in the temperament and susceptibility of persons; and, unless you can prove all to be exactly alike, such claim — that all could have communication if one could — is the height of folly. The fact is (and it may as well be owned), these opposers are obliged to use the weapons of religious superstition to defend themselves with, and they have been falsely educated by the same religion, and to think that if man does exist beyond this sphere, he is necessarily perfect in knowledge and power. This superstition extends to Infidel opponents, and continually misleads them. E. W. C.

"By the foregoing it will be seen that our correspondent takes us

severely to task upon a point wherein we are open to censure, no doubt; but we will show him, in all frankness, before we close, that there is a wide distinction between the case under discussion and every other case he has so broadly alluded to.

"There are two classes of facts and of phenomena which fall within the range of man's perception and consciousness. They all, upon their first advent, seem like miracles, or impossibilities, because they precede the discovery of the law under which they exist. But when the law is made apparent, the phenomena become fixed facts, and very *common* ones. It may be so with this spiritual existence, as our correspondent and Dr. Olcott contend; and if it is demonstrable, why, we shall as frankly confess to our unphilosophical short-coming as we now confess our utter incredulity. There must be a little latitude given to us for the peculiar circumstances and relations under which these spirits have made their advent. Certainly *they* require the broadest margin of faith from those who have not had the *rapping* rapped into their sceptical skulls.

"All the speculations and doubts, queries and reflections, that arise upon so stupendous and infinitely mysterious a subject, are unanswered, unsatisfied in every way; and the facts or phenomena that call for credence rest upon a method of introduction so ludicrous, and so at war with all induction upon the conclusions flowing from granting the first fact, a *spirit*, that we can hardly conceive faith possible even under the 'rappings.'

"Has 'E. W. C.' forgotten that human tradition is full of stories similar to those he has given the public, as well confirmed, as lustily sworn to, as indignantly defended, as these? And do not all now-a-days — heretics and believers — agree in regarding these reported phenomena as the cast-off rags of a day of superstition and darkness?

"The most singular stories of witchcraft have been confirmed by evidence as strong as any we have seen for the Rochester spirits. The whole bundle of supernatural manifestations in Mrs. Crowe's 'Night Side of Nature' has confirmation strong as 'Holy Writ,' — yet who believes *them*? Only those who believed them all, and more too, even before they occurred.

"Our correspondent should consider that this case is one beyond all known laws, and is demonstrable only to a few; and that, having no other basis upon which to rest our credulity than the ground claimed

for all the ghost stories ever put in circulation, we are compelled to withhold it, much as we should like to have its truth confirmed.

"The simple fact that a spirit has knocked on a material substance, and that sound has been made real to a material sense, has already grown to a wide field of fancy and dreamy exaggeration, as we believe. In the last number of the *Spirit Messenger* we see that 'H. D. B.' (H. D. Barron, E. W. C.'s copartner in the spirit-pamphlet, probably) gives an account of spirits taking room and extension; that human faces appeared above them, seemingly shaped of white clouds, that gradually faded away; and Mr. Sunderland even gives an engraving of some characters written by spirits on a *turnip*, and thrown against a window in Connecticut, which characters were translated into verses by A. J. Davis; and it seems some of the spirits in Connecticut write notes in tolerable English upon tangible paper, with a worn-out lead-pencil, and sign them 'H. P. Devil,' the contents being as frivolous as the diplomatic correspondence of a faction of infant scholars.

"Mr. Sunderland says the spiritual hand of one of his children was placed upon his head, and kept moving about several minutes, to make him certain it was his son's hand. Our believing brethren will easily perceive many thousands of the very stubbornest questions which we could ask, and do not, and they will please give us credit for any given amount of forbearance. Certainly, what bantering we have indulged in is but a drop in the bucket to that which we repress from pure charity.

"We know, as well as any man knows himself, that we are not stubbornly dogmatic on annihilation of individual consciousness. How should we be, when the idea of spiritual eternity would be as pleasing to us as to any? We are flesh and blood, endowed with the same love of life as any, and have as earnest a longing for immortality; and the new dispensation comes in to render that immortality peculiarly pleasing, if true, because it assures us we can take an occasional peep at *carnal-dom*, and see schemes mature which we apprehend we shall have to die and leave in an unfinished state. But we submit it to friend C., if we were to change places with him, if he could swallow, without any other evidence than a distant friend's *ipse dixit*, any of the wonderful stories afloat about the spirits, or even the fact upon which these stories are based?

"One of these rumors has just reached our sanctum. A family in Syracuse profess (as we *hear*) to have had communication with Abner Kneeland, and Abner says he was mistaken about Jesus! Then if he

was mistaken about Jesus, the inference is that we are all mistaken about Jesus; the New Testament may be true, and if so, Universalism must be false; the parable of Dives again begins to smell of sulphur, and this earth and its inhabitants are really subject to hell and damnation, *per se*.

"So the consequences of admitting friend C.'s premises are somewhat momentous, and the old Calvinistic argument, that we had better believe in hell, *nolens volens*, because faith *in* it will keep us *out* of it if true, and keep us out of mischief here if false, begins to assume a very hot significance.

"But, really, we must ask to be excused for our incredulity until *we* have some evidence. To us there is none abroad that is not also abroad to prove all the stories in Mrs. Crowe's book. Why are we to be assailed for ridiculing a story upon pretensions exactly of a piece with the pretensions of all other stories universally regarded as the exploded fancies of brain-sick women? Brother C. says he *knows*. When we *know*, there will be an end of ridicule and doubt. And as the spirits do not knock directly through Brother C. (as we have been told), it is as easy for us to know as for him.

"Dr. Olcott says he has seen the spirit leave the body at death; so did A. J. Davis say so just before him. Davis required to be spiritualized; Olcott does not pretend to any such normalism. If Davis and Olcott saw this, it is demonstration to them; but it is overweening arrogance in either of them to ask us to take their simple affirmation of this thing as *true coin*. Without meaning to impugn their veracity at all, we ask if they would take our word for it were we to change places (not characters) with them? We know *they* would not, and we will not, — we cannot if we would.

"The facts assumed are not demonstrable by any other facts we can be cognizant of, — are not within the reach of any of our faculties but a blind credulity, and to this we are not likely to fall a victim at present. If this spiritual life be a fact, it is to be demonstrated to the race (as they say it has been to them), or it is not. If it is to be demonstrated, we shall believe; if it is not, we shall be pretty tolerably apt to continue in doubt; and as many really scientific men have believed in ghosts and witches (and *seen* them *after* they began to believe), we must continue to regard Sunderland, Barron, Capron and Co., as either deceiving, or as falling within that indefinite category where Boswell has left Dr. Johnson and the Cock Lane Ghost.

"We here close this article, but not our remarks. *Spirit* being material in itself, it begins to be material to our purpose; and if it is a fact, it is a material fact, and should furnish material for our columns. If man has a spirit that retains his consciousness without his flesh, blood, bones and brains, then spirits are subjects that fall within the range of our prospectus by pertaining to human welfare. We shall see — probably."

EX-REV. C. C. BURR AND BROTHER.

The next great effort that was, in the estimation of many, to be the grand and final explosion of all spiritual manifestations, was that of the Ex-Rev. C. C. Burr and his "brother Heman" In this country and for the present time any record of the facts in their career of itineracy would not be needed; but this is a record for other times, and it is well that no prominent actor should be left out of the account.

If I remember correctly, the first announcement of Mr. Burr's astounding discoveries was made in December, 1850. In a letter to the New York *Tribune*, dated at Philadelphia, Jan. 2d, 1851, he speaks in the following confident manner of his discovery:

"After a close examination of many 'mediums,' I not only discovered how the 'rappings' are produced, but by much practice at leisure moments I found that I could produce them myself, even louder than I had ever before heard them, and in a manner that no person could detect, if I chose to impose upon his credulity. I have produced the 'rappings' so loud that they were distinctly heard in every part of a hall that was crowded with an audience of a thousand people.

"But when it was demonstrated that the *sounds* could be produced by art, it still remained to be explained how the answers from the pretended spiritual world were, in some cases, so satisfactory and wonderful. And this I had already done in my Lectures on Imagination, Ghost-seeing and the Temperament of Genius. And I had seen my brother, Heman Burr, in his remarkable experiments with mind, produce far more wonderful effects upon the imagination than I had ever witnessed in the phenomena of the 'rappings.' So that art and science together convinced me that the 'spirits' belong, in a very *material* way, to the physical world. You may believe it was a comfort for

me to understand this matter ; for I was, during some little time, pained by a kind of half belief that my sainted brother Edwin, who, in his lifetime, was a young man of the finest taste and of high poetical genius, had so far forgotten the natural dignity and delicacy of his character as to come back to commune with me by making most vulgar noises, rattling about under chairs and tables, and kicking over light-stands and bureaus in the dark, to excite my wonder and horror. In the short course of scientific lectures which I shall commence in Hope Chapel, on Monday evening, Jan. 13th, I shall not only show how these noises are produced, and how any one may infallibly detect their origin, and stop the 'spirits,' but the philosophy of the satisfactory answers from the 'spiritual world' will, I think, be made plain to the humblest capacity ; and my brother will give illustrations of the new philosophy by experiments with the imagination of any number of gentlemen who come forward voluntarily out of the audience. These experiments did not, of course, originally belong to my Lectures on Imagination and Ghost-seeing, but they are appended as natural enough illustrations of my philosophy ; and they cannot fail to show any man, who is not already made crazy by the 'spirits,' that the whole phenomenon of the 'knockings' is perfectly explained a good way this side of the other world. C. Chauncey Burr."

This is a specimen of Mr. B.'s whole career throughout the country. He was always going to show how he could expose the "rapping" when people came to his lectures, which they could do by paying twenty-five cents. This letter was a capital "puff" for his forthcoming lectures. A portion of the New York press was taken with the bait, and the *Express*, *Herald*, and other papers, that have always been noted for their easy assent to every passing theory, however ridiculous, that pretended to account for the phenomena, seized upon this, and announced that "the Rochester knockings were now to be exposed to a certainty."

The time arrived. Mr. Burr and his brother Heman delivered their lectures, and performed their mountebank tricks, and — made a total failure of it, so far as proving anything in regard to the alleged fraud of the media. The *Tribune* declared that "the sounds were so far from being identical with the spiritual knockings, that we should be forced to the conclusion that they could not be made by the same means. We should as soon think of referring the notes of a flute and

a trumpet to the same instrument. If Mr. Burr's sounds are produced by the toe joints, the Rochester sounds are produced in some other way. There was a peculiar ring to those sounds which Mr. Burr did not produce on the occasion, though he said he would be able to do so hereafter." *

This notice did not exactly satisfy the exhibitors, and "my brother Heman" published an explanatory note in the next day's paper, and with all the gravity of an owl, and about the same amount of wisdom, laid down the following "scientific" propositions:

"There are at least five circumstances which vary the *volume* and *tone* of the sounds, although they are *in all mediums produced in the same way*.

"1. The size and strength of the toe.

"2. The tightness of the shoe.

"3. The thickness and dryness of the sole.

"4. The moisture or dryness of the foot.

"5. The substance on which the rapper stands."

The apparent confidence with which this statement was made would seem ludicrous in the extreme, were it not for the fact that it carried more evidence of knavery than folly when taken in connection with men of the Messrs. Burr's intelligence, and of their expressions to sundry individuals previously of an entirely different opinion of the origin of these sounds. The papers advertising for the exhibition (except the *Tribune*) all commended and endorsed Mr. Burr's exposé, just as they had swallowed a dozen different exposés before it. The *Express* declared that they had "pricked the bubble, and it had burst, and gone off in mere vapor." Their lectures, however, grew less and less interesting to the public as the "humbug" of the two mountebanks became more palpable.

As they ran out in one place they would go to another, and thus they made the tour of the northern, eastern and western states, visiting the principal places. At Providence, R. I., they concerted with a man to come upon the stage and have his name spelled out — they and he pretending that they did not know his name until they cracked it

* This promise Mr. Burr never redeemed.

out by their toes. The pretence was that they did it by noticing his change of countenance when they came to the right letter in calling the alphabet. The whole trick was detected, and their dishonesty exposed by the editor of a daily paper in that city. Trickery and dishonesty, coupled with slander, defamation and bombast, were the chief ingredients that made up these lectures.

At Cleveland, Ohio, C. C. Burr was prosecuted for slander by Mrs. Fish (of the Fox family), and held to bail to answer to the charge. Joel Tiffany, Esq., a lawyer, challenged him for a discussion, and it was held. The tone of the press of that city was decidedly against Burr. The *Plaindealer* said he was a blackguard and a slanderer. Indeed, there was no place where he went that he did not excite the contempt of those who knew anything of the subject, and the disgust of those opposed to spiritualism.

Failing in his attempts to make much money by the "exposé," he concluded to make a bold stroke for the utter annihilation of all media in general, and the Fox family in particular. In his peregrinations, he visited a Mrs. Culver, who lives in the town of Arcadia, N. Y., and is a distant relative (by marriage) of the Fox family. This woman was, for a long time, a bitter enemy of the part of the family to which the mediums belonged. Moreover, for some time after the Fox girls went to reside at Rochester, she was a medium herself, and had the "rappings" with her. She was a sympathetic clairvoyant, and a very susceptible subject, and, when in this state, could be made to say and do anything the operator pleased. With this woman Mr. Burr agreed, either for a consideration, or from motives of envy, jealousy, or revenge, to make and publish a story which would forever put to rest this question, so far as the Fox family was concerned. Very naturally this piece of villany was first published in the New York *Express*, — a most fitting organ for such a man, — and its credulity, shown in swallowing all previous exposures, naturally turned Burr's attention to it as a fit subject to be again imposed upon by his unscrupulous trickery. The statement obtained by this woman was as follows; and we give the solemn preface of the *Express* to make it more impressive!

"The Spiritual Rapping Imposture. — It is a melancholy commentary upon the intelligence of the age that so barefaced and impu-

dent an imposition as the so-called spiritual rappings are now shown to be, could ever have imposed upon the minds or perceptions of even the most ignorant or superstitious among us. And what is still more amazing is the fact that the swindle, gross as it was in some degree, has actually had — nay, is now having — the countenance, if not the actual support, of sundry presses whose claim to influence and respectability ordinarily is entitled to acknowledgment. But so it is. And such being the discreditable fact, is it any wonder that the foreign press abroad is taunting us as a people credulous and superstitious to an extent it is hard to reconcile with our general improvement and progress in all other respects? The *London Athenæum*, for example, names one of our city papers as an advocate and voucher of the 'spirits,' and thereupon proceeds to enlarge upon this beautiful feature of a beautiful specimen of 'the American press.' Now, we do not care a feather about what the *London Athenæum*, or the *London Times*, or any other foreign journal, has to say of us; but we cannot help lamenting the discreditable spectacle journalism is making of itself here at home, when its influence is thus volunteered to strengthen or give encouragement to one of the most superlatively silly, dishonest, immoral, blasphemous impostures ever set up among men. Is it a wonder that we have so many 'wise' madmen spring up among us,— so many new 'philosophers' in morals, religion and politics, — when the press is thus prostituted and perverted?

"From the time that these 'rappings' were first 'brought out' at Rochester down to their exhibitions in this city, and from that time to this, this journal has always maintained that collusion, dishonesty, falsehood, were at the bottom of their so-called manifestations. And we have, time and again, stated at length, and with the utmost precision of detail, the grounds upon which that conviction was predicated. In the face of all this, however, there were still many believers and doubters. As we have now a full admission, from the lips of persons who acted as confederates of the Fox girls, that the whole affair was, as the *Express* said it was, an imposture of the most dishonest character, we are hoping hereafter to hear that the humbug is repudiated everywhere and by everybody. Let those who have been the willing dupes of the 'rappings' read the Burr statement we copy below, and be convinced of the impudent imposture of which they have been made the victims.

"'THE GHOSTS AT THE CONFESSIONAL.

"'*Extract from the deposition of Mrs. Norman Culver, taken at Arcadia, N. Y., April* 17, 1851.

"'I am, by marriage, a connection of the Fox girls; their brother married my husband's sister. The girls have been a great deal at my house, and for about two years I was a very sincere believer in the rappings; but some things which I saw, when I was visiting the girls at Rochester, made me suspect that they were deceiving. I resolved to satisfy myself in some way, and soon afterwards I made a proposition to Catharine to assist her in producing the manifestations. I had a cousin visiting me from Michigan, who was going to consult the spirits, and I told Catharine that, if they intended to go to Detroit, it would be a great thing for them to convince him. I also told her that if I could do anything to help her, I would do it cheerfully; that I should probably be able to answer all the questions he would ask, and I would do it if she would show me how to make the raps. She said that, as Margaretta was absent, she wanted somebody to help her, and that if I would become a medium, she would explain it all to me. She said that when my cousin consulted the spirit, I must sit next to her, and touch her arm when the right letter was called. I did so, and was able to answer nearly all the questions correctly. After I had helped her in this way a few times, she revealed to me the secret. The raps are produced with the toes. All the toes are used. After nearly a week's practice, with Catharine showing me how, I could produce them perfectly myself. At first it was very hard work to do it. Catharine told me to warm my feet, or put them in warm water, and it would then be easier work to rap; she said that she sometimes had to warm her feet three or four times in the course of an evening. I found that heating my feet did enable me to rap a great deal easier.

"'Catharine told me how to manage to answer the questions. She said it was generally easy enough to answer right if the one who asked the questions called the alphabet. She said the reason why they asked people to write down several names on paper, and then point to them till the spirit rapped at the right one, was to give them a chance to watch the countenances and motions of the persons, and that in that way they could nearly always guess right. She also explained how they held down and moved tables. [Mrs. Culver gave us some illustrations of the tricks.] She told me that all I should have to do to make

the raps heard on the table would be to put my foot against the bottom of the table when I rapped; and that, when I wished to make the raps sound distant on the wall, I must make them louder, and direct my own eyes earnestly to the spot where I wished them to be heard. She said, if I could put my foot against the bottom of the door, the raps would be heard on the top of the door. Catharine told me that, when the committee held their ankles in Rochester, the Dutch servant-girl rapped with her knuckles under the floor from the cellar. The girl was instructed to rap whenever she heard their voices calling the spirits. Catharine also showed me how they made the sounds of sawing and planing boards. [The whole trick was explained to us.] When I was at Rochester, last January, Margaretta told me that when people insisted on seeing her feet and toes, she could produce a few raps with her knees and ankles.

"'Elizabeth Fish (Mrs. Fish's daughter), who now lives with her father, was the first one who produced these raps. She accidentally discovered the way to make them by playing with her toes against the foot-board while in bed. The whole secret was revealed to me, with the understanding that I should act as a medium when the girls were away. Catharine said that whenever I practised, I had better have my little girl at the table with me, and make folks believe that she was the medium, for she said they would not suspect so young a child of any trick. When she was instructing me how to be a medium, she told me how frightened they used to get in New York for fear somebody would detect them, and gave me the whole history of all the tricks they played upon the people there. She said that once Margaretta spoke aloud, and the whole party believed it was a spirit.

"'Mrs. Norman Culver.'

"'We hereby certify that Mrs. Culver is one of the most reputable and intelligent ladies in the town of Arcadia. We were present when she made the disclosures contained in the above paper; we had heard the same from her before, and we cheerfully bear testimony that there cannot be the slightest doubt of the truth of the whole statement.

"'C. G. Pomeroy, M. D.
Rev. D. S. Chase.'

"'I have in my possession other depositions from persons residing in Rochester, who have been confederates of the Fox girls in the rap-

ping business, which, in due time and form, will be made public. The reign of those impostors is nearly at an end; and the few editors who have been the means of deceiving the public in relation to their real character will, I trust, have their reward in the deep indignation and scorn of those whose credulity has been abused. H. BURR.'

"'Pittsburg, May 20, 1851.'"

The boldness of this statement was its only merit. It was an entire fabrication in all its essential statements. Being perfectly conversant with the investigation at Rochester, and knowing that part of the statement to be false, I sent the following brief reply to the *Express*, which was published:

"I notice in the *Express* of Saturday what pretends to be a statement of a confession (in 'extracts' from an unsworn-to 'deposition') made by Catharine Fox to Mrs. Norman Culver, of Arcadia, N. Y. Without noticing the loose and indefinite manner of the whole statement, I wish to call attention to the following extract:

"'Catharine told me that, when the committee held their ankles at Rochester, the Dutch servant-girl rapped with her knuckles under the floor from the cellar. The girl was instructed to rap whenever she heard their voices calling the spirits.'

"As I was present during the investigations, and had an opportunity to know something of the circumstances, I will ask space to state,

"1st. That, during that investigation (which lasted three days, and was carried on by three different committees), not one of the examinations took place in the house of the Fox family; the first meeting of the committee being in the Hall of the Sons of Temperance, the second at the office of Vice-Chancellor Whittlesey, and the third at the rooms of Doctor Gates at the Rochester House.

"2d. There was no previous notice given to the family, and they did not know where they were to go until the committee called for them.

"3d. They did not have, and never had, a Dutch or other servant-girl in the family at Rochester up to the time of the investigation.

"4th. Catharine Fox was not in Rochester during any part of these investigations, *but was at my house in Auburn, seventy miles distant.*

"Any further comment on the above unsworn 'deposition' would be superfluous, as the above serves to illustrate its character.

"E. W. Capron."

It may be well, in this place, to state some other facts in connection with this singular affair. The two persons — doctor and preacher — who gave the certificate of character to Mrs. Culver, were not neighbors, and knew very little about her, living as they did several miles distant. They were, moreover, bitter and unreasonable opponents of the manifestations. It will be observed by the careful reader, who has heard Burr lecture, or seen his position stated, that the "deposition" is made, in every particular, to corroborate his theory. Everything was "exactly as he thought it would be," like the old lady who was told that the cow had eaten the grindstone. Her way of producing the sounds, of accounting for them in different places, of the sounds on the wall, all was precisely as he had been stating in his lectures and writings. It was a great misfortune for Mr. Burr that he was not acquainted with the fact that Catharine did not attend the celebrated Rochester investigation, and that Mrs. Fish never had a Dutch servant, or any other, up to that time. Had he known this he would, no doubt, have fixed up a story that would have been more plausible. At it was, the Messrs. Burr and Mrs. Culver sank together, and their notoriety, as the exposers of spiritualism, ceased.

I have not thought it necessary to follow the Burrs to every place, and give an account of their reception. In Pittsburg they made an indiscriminate attack on Mrs. Fish and the Fox family, Mr. Tiffany (who confronted them at Cleveland, and also acted as counsel for Mrs. Fish in her prosecution of C. C. Burr for slander), and a medium and other citizens of Pittsburg. He was completely answered and silenced by an article published in the *Pittsburg Post* of that city, in which O. S. Fowler and others give certificates, completely overthrowing the slanderous assumptions of Burr. He was defended in character, talents and honesty, by Jane G. Swisshelm, editor of the *Saturday Visitor*. She has always opposed spiritual manifestations with what ability she had; but was much more combative and flippant than profound.

PROFESSORS MATTISON AND PAGE.

I think I have recorded pretty much all the different kinds of newspaper exposures; and it is only necessary to mention that, during the winter of 1852–3, a Methodist minister, who calls himself Rev. H. Mattison, A. M., delivered many lectures, pretending to expose the "rappings" (for which the press, in different places, accused him of obtaining money under false pretences), but was so bold in his asserting that the things alleged never did happen, that he attracted little notice except as a pretender. He afterward published a book entitled "Spirit Rappings Overthrown," being a very feeble attempt at wit, and perfectly successful as a blackguard. In the summer of the same year one "Professor Charles G. Page," of Washington, D. C., published a book (or pamphlet of ninety-six pages), in which he said as near nothing as possible. It was truly "full of sound and fury, signifying nothing." The nearest a position he took was, that the sounds were produced by *leaden balls tied to the toes!* The tables, &c., never moved as pretended. This, I think, is a fair "table of contents" of these two books. They were both considered as the *true* "exposé" by some newspaper editors, but the notices of them did not appear quite as confident as those of former exposures. The press seemed to be weary of so often endorsing any new pretender to exposures.

PROFESSOR HARE.

Professor Hare, one of the best electricians in the world, being called upon for an opinion in regard to electrical agency in table-moving, gave the following opinion in the Philadelphia *Inquirer* of July 28th, 1853:

"I am of opinion that it is utterly impossible for six or eight, or any number of persons, seated around a table, to produce an electrical current. Moreover, I am confident that if by any adequate means an electrical current were created, however forcible, it could not be productive of table-turning. A dry, wooden table is almost a non-conductor, but if forming a link necessary to complete a circuit between the sky and earth, it might possibly be shattered by a stroke of lightning; but if the power of all the galvanic apparatus ever made were to

be collected in one current, there would be no power to *move* or otherwise affect such a table.

"Frictional electricity, such as produced by electrical machines, must first be accumulated and then discharged, in order to produce any striking effect. It is *in transitu* that its power is seen and felt.

"Insulated conductors, whether inanimate or in the form of animals, may be electrified by the most powerful means, without being injured or seriously incommoded. Before a spark of lightning poises, every object on the terrestrial surface, for a great distance around, is subjected to a portion of the requisite previous accumulation. Yet it is only those objects which are made the medium of discharge that are sensibly affected.

"Powerful galvanic accumulation can only be produced by those appropriate arrangements, which concentrate upon a comparatively small filament of particles their peculiar polarizing power; but nothing seems to me more inconsistent with experience than to suppose a table moved by any possible form or mode of galvanic reäction.

"It was ascertained by Gaziot that one of the most powerful galvanic batteries ever made could not give a spark *before* contact to a conductor presented to it at the smallest distance which could be made by a delicate micrometer.

"More than a month since, at the house of a friend, a number of respectable visitors were observing a charming young lady, who was under the impression that a table caused the movements which actually resulted from her touching it. I then stated that the subject was a physiological mystery, not a purely physical mystery. The only subject for inquiry was, how people could so deceive themselves as to suppose that what they really moved, moved them. Putting *my hand* on the table, it displayed not the slightest tendency to motion. Yet, whatever an admiring youngster might do, who would suppose that a *table* would move more readily for a young lady than for an old man? If there is any law * * * it is that *inanimate* matter cannot *per se* change its state as respects motion or rest."

This was given while he was a most determined sceptic, but his knowledge of electricity made the very idea of such an agent, as the moving cause, preposterous to him. It is well known that his subsequent experiments and investigations resulted in his conviction that the phenomena was the result of spiritual agency.

SENATORS, JUDGES, &C.

Many excellent letters and communications have been written by men eminent for their scientific attainments, their statesmanship, and their distinguished position in society. Among these I have already mentioned ex-senator Simmons, of Rhode Island, Hon. N. P. Tallmadge, formerly U. S. senator and governor of Wisconsin, and Hon. John W. Edmonds, of the Supreme Court of the State of New York. In May, 1853, Mr. Tallmadge wrote a letter to the *National Intelligencer*, in reply to a communication against the spirituality of the manifestations. It was a bold and most able reply to the several objections, as well as the aspersions on the judgment of some of the distinguished friends of spiritualism. It very naturally attracted much attention, emanating, as it did, from one of our distinguished statesmen.

In the month of August, of the same year, Judge Edmonds made a statement to the public, in explanation of his position, and contradicting some of the slanders which had been circulated against him. His whole letter is eminently worthy of preservation, and contains much that should be carefully treasured up by every lover of truth. It is as follows:

"TO THE PUBLIC.

"On my return from an excursion into the country, I found that, during my absence, a decision, lately pronounced by me, had been seized upon as an occasion for an attack, in several quarters, on my religious belief. I was fully aware that that judgment, running counter as it would to popular sentiment, would subject my action to severe criticism; but I confess I did not anticipate that thence would flow an assault upon my religious opinions. Were I a private citizen I should content myself with merely claiming the right which belongs to every one in this country of entertaining such faith on this — the most important of all topics — as my conscience might dictate. And as it is, I might perhaps rest satisfied with challenging those who assail me to point out a single article in my creed that aims at aught else than exalted private worth and public virtue. But as the position which I occupy renders the soundness as well as the integrity of my judgment a matter of public interest, I am bound to acknowledge the

right of others to question my faith, and my own obligation to defend it.

"I acknowledge a still further obligation. And, inasmuch as I accepted my present position under the implied understanding, at least, that I believed in the Christian religion, and would administer our civil law according to the principles of the divine law, as it had been revealed to us, on which all our institutions were based, so I am bound to certify to those who have intrusted me with the divine attribute of administering justice among men, that my reverence for that revelation has not been shaken, nor my obedience to that moral law impaired.

"I have not, however, waited for these assaults to be impressed with these obligations, but have already so far felt them that I have prepared to publish a volume on the subject, which, but for my other vocations, would, ere this, have been in the printer's hands. To that I must refer for much, in elucidation and proof of my belief, which the limits of this communication will not allow me to dwell upon, and content myself on this occasion with such general statements as may tend to give a correct idea of what it is that I believe or have done. Even this would not have been necessary if those who assail me had but done me the justice themselves to have published anything I have said or written on the subject. But hitherto I have been able to reach the public only through publications of very limited circulation, and the wildest and most erroneous notions have therefore been imbibed as to my belief, and the mischief has been increased by the recklessness with which erroneous statements have been fabricated by those who could not know them to be true, but who could easily have ascertained them to be false.

"Thus one writer,* with a want of feeling not perhaps surprising, speaks of my consulting my dead wife, in making up my decisions. Another says that it is 'rumored' that I have consulted spirit manifestations in regard to my decisions. Another, that my belief is 'at irreconcilable variance with all divine revelation, and is fit for no other system than devil-worship;' and still another, that 'it constitutes an abandonment of all self-control, and a surrender of the supremacy of reason, as informed and enlightened by the senses, to the most nonsensical jugglery.'

* *Daily Chronicle*, of New London.

"All these statements are as wide as they can be of truth, and I might, with some justice, complain at being subjected to such grievous imputations merely because I had made a decision which was unacceptable to a portion of the community. But it is not for the purpose of complaining that I sit down to write. I am aware that it is not so much me, as it is the faith which I profess, which is the object of attack. It is 'the mighty theme, and not the inconsiderable advocate,' which offends. I am also aware why it is that so much error exists in the public mind on that subject, and my whole purpose is, so far as I am concerned, to correct that error; to state truly, as far as I can in this connection, what it is that I do believe, and generally the grounds on which my belief is founded, that all who take interest enough in the matter to read what I may say, may have the means of judging for themselves as to what I really do believe, rather than what others erroneously impute to me as a belief.

"I am sincerely grateful to my assailants for not imputing to me any unworthy or selfish motives; for conceding that, as a private citizen, I 'stand exempt from public criticism,' and that I am 'not a fool;' and for confining themselves to the mere imputation that I am laboring under a delusion. It is, therefore, to that point I shall confine myself in what I have now to say.

"It was January, 1851, that my attention was first called to the subject of 'spiritual intercourse.' I was at the time withdrawn from general society; I was laboring under great depression of spirits. I was occupying all my leisure in reading on the subject of death, and man's existence afterward. I had, in the course of my life, read and heard from the pulpit so many contradictory and conflicting doctrines on the subject, that I hardly knew what to believe. I could not, if I would, believe what I did not understand, and was anxiously seeking to know, if, after death, we should again meet with those whom we had loved here, and under what circumstances. I was invited by a friend to witness the 'Rochester Knockings.' I complied, more to oblige her, and to while away a tedious hour. I thought a good deal on what I witnessed, and I determined to investigate the matter and find out what it was. If it was a deception, or a delusion, I thought that I could detect it. For about four months I devoted at least two evenings in a week, and sometimes more, to witnessing the phenomena in all its phases. I kept careful records of all I witnessed, and from time to time compared them with each other, to detect inconsistencies

and contradictions. I read all I could lay my hands on on the subject, and especially all the professed 'exposures of the humbug.' I went from place to place, seeing different mediums, meeting with different parties of persons, — often with persons whom I had never seen before, and sometimes where I was myself entirely unknown, — sometimes in the dark and sometimes in the light, — often with inveterate unbelievers, and more frequently with zealous believers. In fine, I availed myself of every opportunity that was afforded, thoroughly to sift the matter to the bottom. I was all this time an unbeliever, and tried the patience of believers sorely by my scepticism, my captiousness, and my obdurate refusal to yield my belief. I saw around me some who yielded a ready faith on one or two sittings only; others again, under the same circumstances, avowing a determined unbelief; and some who refused to witness it at all, and yet were confirmed unbelievers. I could not imitate either of these parties, and refused to yield, unless upon most irrefragable testimony. At length the evidence came, and in such force that no sane man could withhold his faith.

"Thus far, the question I was investigating was, whether what I saw was produced by mere mortal means, or by some invisible, unknown agency; in other words, whether it was a deception, an imposition, or, what it professed to be, the product of some unknown, unseen cause. To detail what I witnessed, would far exceed the limits of this communication, for my records of it, for those four months alone, fill, at least, one hundred and thirty closely-written pages. I will, however, mention a few things, which will give a general idea of that which characterized interviews now numbering several hundred. Most of them have occurred in the presence of others besides myself. I have preserved their names in my records, but do not give them to the world, because I do not desire to subject them to the obloquy which seems most strangely to be visited upon all who look into the matter with any other feeling than a resolute and obstinate incredulity, whatever the evidence. But these considerations grow out of this fact: 1st. That I have thus very many witnesses, whom I can invoke to establish the truth of my statements; and, 2d. That if I have been deluded, and have not seen and heard what I think I have, my delusion has been shared by many as shrewd, as intelligent, as honest and as enlightened people as are to be found anywhere among us.

"My attention was first drawn to the intercourse by the rappings,

then the most common, but now the most inconsiderable, mode of communing. Of course, I was on the look-out for deception, and at first relied upon my senses and the conclusions which my reason might draw from their evidence. But I was at a loss to tell how the mediums could cause what I witnessed under these circumstances. The mediums walking the length of a suite of parlors, forty or fifty feet, and the rappings being distinctly heard five or six feet behind them, the whole distance, backward and forward several times; being heard near the top of a mahogany door, above where the medium could reach, and as if struck hard with a fist; being heard on the bottom of a car when travelling on a railroad, and on the floor and the table, when seated at lunch, at an eating-house, by the side of the road; being heard at different parts of the room, sometimes several feet distant from the medium, and where she could not reach; sometimes on the table, and, immediately after, on the floor, and then at different parts of the table, in rapid succession, enabling us to feel the vibration, as well as hear the sounds; sometimes when the hands and feet of the medium were both firmly and carefully held by some one of the party, and sometimes on a table when no one touched it.

"After depending upon my senses, as to these various phases of the phenomenon, I invoked the aid of science, and, with the assistance of an accomplished electrician and his machinery, and eight or ten intelligent, educated, shrewd persons, examined the matter. We pursued our inquiries many days, and established, to our satisfaction, two things; first, That the sounds were not produced by the agency of any person present or near us; and, second, That they were not forthcoming at our will and pleasure.

"In the mean time another feature attracted my attention, and that was 'physical manifestations,' as they are termed. Thus, I have known a pine table, with four legs, lifted bodily up from the floor, in the centre of a circle of six or eight persons, turned upside down, and laid upon its top at our feet, then lifted up over our heads, and put leaning against the back of the sofa on which we sat. I have known that same table to be tilted upon two legs, its top at an angle with the floor of forty-five degrees, when it neither fell over of itself, nor could any person present put it back on its four legs. I have seen a mahogany table, having only a centre leg, and with a lamp burning upon it, lifted from the floor at least a foot, in spite of the efforts of those present, and shaken backward and forward as one would shake a gob-

let in his hand, and the lamp retain its place, though its glass pendants rang again. I have seen the same table tipped up with the lamp upon it, so far that the lamp must have fallen off unless retained there by something else than its own gravity; yet it fell not, moved not. I have known a dinner-bell taken from a high shelf in a closet, rung over the heads of four or five persons in that closet, then rung around the room over the heads of twelve or fifteen persons in the back parlor, and then borne through the folding doors to the further end of the front parlor, and there dropped on the floor. I have frequently known persons pulled about with a force which it was impossible for them to resist, and once, when all my own strength was added in vain to that of the one thus affected. I have known a mahogany chair thrown on its side, and moved swiftly back and forth on the floor, no one touching it, through a room where there were at least a dozen people sitting; yet no one was touched, and it was repeatedly stopped within a few inches of me, when it was coming with a violence, which, if not arrested, must have broken my legs.

"This is not a tithe, nay, not a hundredth part of what I have witnessed of the same character, but it is enough to show the general nature of what was before me.

"At the same time, I have heard from others, whose testimony would be credited in any human transactions, and which I could not permit myself to disregard, accounts of still more extraordinary transactions; for I have been by no means as much favored in this respect as some.

"While these things were going on, there appeared in the newspapers various explanations and 'exposures of the humbug,' as they were termed. I read them with care, in the expectation of being assisted in my researches, and I could not but smile at once at the rashness and the futility of the explanations. For instance, while certain learned professors in Buffalo were congratulating themselves on having detected it in the toe and knee joints, the manifestations in this city changed to ringing a bell placed under the table. They were like the solution lately given by a learned professor in England, who attributes the tipping of tables to a force in the hands which are laid upon it, overlooking the material fact that tables quite as frequently move when there is no hand upon them.

"What I have thus mentioned has happened in the presence of others as well as myself. I have not alluded to any of the things

which have occurred to me when I have been alone; for, as that would depend upon my testimony only, I have preferred not to subject my veracity to the rash and reckless contradictions of those who venture to denounce as an 'atrocious imposture' that of which they are profoundly ignorant, and which has been examined, and is believed in, by thousands and tens of thousands of their fellow-citizens, who are, to say the least, every whit as honest and as intelligent as they are. Nor am I very anxious to submit my faith to the judgment of those who would have persecuted Galileo nigh unto death for discovering our planetary system, and have united in the cry of 'folly' at the Fulton's steamboat, 'humbug' at Morse's telegraph, and 'insanity' at Gray's iron road.

"Having thus, by a long series of patient inquiries, satisfied myself on this point, my next inquiry was, Whence comes the intelligence there is behind it all? For that intelligence was a remarkable feature of the phenomenon.

"Thus I have frequently known mental questions answered, that is, questions merely framed in the mind of the interrogator, and not revealed by him or known to others. Preparatory to meeting a circle, I have sat down alone in my room, and carefully prepared a series of questions to be propounded, and I have been surprised to find my questions answered, and in the precise order in which I wrote them, without my even taking my memorandum out of my pocket, and when I knew that not a person present even knew that I had prepared questions, much less what they were. My most secret thoughts, those which I have never uttered to mortal man or woman, have been freely spoken to as if I had uttered them. Purposes which I have privily entertained have been publicly revealed; and I have once and again been admonished that my every thought was known to, and could be disclosed by, the intelligence which was thus manifesting itself.

"I have heard the mediums use Greek, Latin, Spanish and French words, when I knew they had no knowledge of any language but their own; and it is a fact, that can be attested by many, that often there have been speaking and writing in foreign languages and unknown tongues by those who are unacquainted with either.

"Still the question occurred, may not all this have been, by some mysterious operation, the mere reflex of the mind of some one present? The answer was, that facts were communicated which were unknown then, but afterward found to be true; like this, for instance: when I

was absent last winter in Central America, my friends in town heard of my whereabouts and of the state of my health seven times; and, on my return, by comparing their information with the entries in my journal, it was found to be invariably correct. So, in my recent visit to the west, my whereabouts and my condition were told to a medium in this city, while I was travelling on the railroad between Cleveland and Toledo. So thoughts have been uttered on subjects not then in my mind, and utterly at variance with my own notions. This has often happened to me and to others, so as fully to establish the fact that it was not our minds that gave birth to or affected the communication.

"Kindred to this are two well-authenticated cases of persons who can read the thoughts of others in their minds. One is an artist of this city, of high reputation, and the other the editor of a newspaper in a neighboring city. The latter wrote me, that, in company with three friends, he had tried the experiment, and, for over forty successive attempts, found he could read the secret thoughts of his companions as soon as they were formed, and without their being uttered. So, too, there is the instance of two persons, one of them also a resident in this city, who can give a faithful delineation of the character and even the prevailing mood of mind of any person, however unknown to them, upon whom they fix their attention.

"These are not apocryphal cases. The parties are at hand, and in our very midst, and any person that pleases may make the investigation, as I have, and satisfy himself.

"But all this, and much, very much more of a cognate nature, went to show me that there was a high order of intelligence involved in this new phenomenon; an intelligence outside of and beyond mere mortal agency; for there was no other hypothesis which I could devise or hear of that could at all explain that whose reality is established by the testimony of tens of thousands, and can easily be ascertained by any one who will take the trouble to inquire.

"If these two points were established, — and there are now in these United States hundreds of thousands of sentient beings who have investigated and believe they are, — then came this important question, *cui bono?* To what end is it all? For what purpose? With what object?

"To that inquiry I have directed my earnest attention, devoting to the task for over two years all the leisure I could command, and in-

creasing that leisure as far as I could by withdrawing myself from all my former recreations. I have gone from circle to circle, from medium to medium, seeking knowledge on the subject wherever I could obtain it, either from books or from observation, and bringing to bear upon it whatever of intelligence I have been gifted with by nature, sharpened and improved by over thirty years' practice at the bar, in the legislature and on the bench.

"I found there were very many ways in which this unseen intelligence communed with us, besides the rappings and table-tippings, and that through those other modes there came very many communications distinguished for their eloquence, their high order of intellect, and their pure and lofty usual tone; at the same time I discovered many inconsistencies and contradictions that were calculated to mislead. I saw many puerile and some very absurd statements, and many that were admirably calculated to make man better and happier; and I set to work to see if I could not, out of this chaos, gather something that might be valuable.

"I was satisfied that something more was intended than the gratification of an idle curiosity; something more than pandering to a diseased appetite for the marvellous; something more than the promulgation of oracular platitudes; something more than the upsetting material objects to the admiration of the wonder-lover; something more than telling the age of the living, of the dead, &c.

"For that something I have industriously searched. I thought that was wiser than to condemn without investigation, and denounce without knowledge. What I have discovered in that regard I have intended to give to the world, that all may judge for themselves whether there is anything in it worthy the attention of intelligent beings. It would have been done ere this if my leisure would have allowed me time to prepare my manuscript for the press. Now I expect that my book will be published by the first of September, and to that I refer, as I have already said, for particulars.

"In the mean time, it is due to myself and to others to say, that our faith, as growing out of these researches, is not 'at irreconcilable variance with revelation.' How little do they, who make such charges, know of this matter! Misled by the credulities which alone are seen in the newspapers of the day, because the graver matters cannot find admission there, the idea is, I am aware, entertained by some that this new philosophy is at variance with the revelation through

Christ the Redeemer. This is, indeed, a sad mistake, and one that believers would be too happy to correct, if only the opportunity could be afforded them.

"So, too, is it a grievous error to suppose that it 'constitutes an abandonment of all self-control, and a surrender of the supremacy of reason, as informed and enlightened by the senses.' There was never yet, I venture to say, a religious creed promulgated among men which so entirely eschewed blind faith, and so fully and always demanded the exercise of the judgment and the supremacy of the reason.

"Hence it is that we are taught that none of these extraordinary things which are witnessed by so many, are miraculous, or flow from any suspension of nature's laws, but are, on the other hand, in conformity with and in execution of those laws; that, like the steam engine and the magnetic telegraph, they are marvellous only to those who do not understand them, or are not familiar with them; that those laws, and the means by which they produce such results, are as capable of being found out by human research; that the knowledge is not confined to a few, but is open to all, rich or poor, high or low, wise or ignorant, who will wisely and patiently search for it; and that, when it is attained, it cannot but work in the heart 'a closer walk with God,' and an intercourse with our fellow-men of a more elevated character, void of selfishness, and devoted to their absolute advancement in all knowledge and goodness, both in this world and in the world to come.

"This is a part of the something which I have found in my researches. But there is more yet. There is that which comforts the mourner, and binds up the broken-hearted; that which smooths the passage to the grave, and robs death of its terrors; that which enlightens the atheist, and cannot but reform the vicious; that which cheers and encourages the virtuous amid all the trials and vicissitudes of life; and that which demonstrates to man his duty and his destiny, leaving it no longer vague and uncertain. What that is I cannot in the limits of this letter explain, but, in due time, it will be forthcoming, and each one can judge for himself.

"But now may I not ask if I overrate the importance of the subject of my inquiries? Scarcely more than four years have elapsed since the 'Rochester Knockings' were first known among us. Then mediums could be counted by units, but now by thousands; then believers could be numbered by hundreds, now by tens of thousands. It is believed by

the best-informed that the whole number in the United States must be several hundred thousands, and that in this city and its vicinity there must be from twenty-five to thirty thousand. There are ten or twelve newspapers and periodicals devoted to the cause, and the Spiritual Library embraces more than one hundred different publications, some of which have already attained a circulation of more than ten thousand copies. Besides the undistinguished multitude, there are many men of high standing and talent, ranked among them, — doctors, lawyers and clergymen in great numbers, a Protestant bishop, the learned and reverend president of a college, judges of our higher courts, members of Congress, foreign ambassadors and ex-members of the United States Senate.

"That which has thus spread with such marvellous celerity, in spite of the ridicule which has deterred so many from an open avowal, — that which has attracted the attention of so many of the best minds among us, — cannot be unworthy of my investigation, or that of persons far wiser and more reliable than I am.

"It is now more than a year that my peculiar faith has been the subject of public comment. During it all I have been silent as to those attacks, content steadily to pursue my investigations until I could arrive at satisfactory results. Perhaps I have been silent too long, for, in the mean time, very erroneous notions as to that faith have been allowed to spring up. But I was unwilling to speak until I was as sure as I could be that I was right, lest I might utter some crudity, which, by and by, I might regret, or commit some error, which I might find it difficult to correct, or, in fine, unhappily mislead in my ignorance, rather than wisely guide by my knowledge.

"I went into the investigation, originally thinking it a deception, and intending to make public my exposure of it. Having, from my researches, come to a different conclusion, I feel that the obligation to make known the result is just as strong. Therefore it is, mainly, that I give the result to the world. I say mainly, because there is another consideration which influences me, and that is, the desire to extend to others a knowledge which I am conscious cannot but make them happier and better.

"If those who doubt this could but spend a few days with me in my library, and witness the calls I have from strangers from all parts of the country; if they could but look over my portfolio, and read the letters which pour in upon me from all sections, and from persons

whom I have never seen and never may see, they would be able, from the evidence thus furnished of the good that has been done, to form some idea of what may yet be accomplished, and they would not wonder that I find a compensation for the obloquy that is so freely heaped upon me by the ignorant, in the grateful outpourings of hearts which have, by my means, been relieved. One of them says — and it is a fair specimen of the whole — 'You have acted the part of the good Samaritan, and poured oil into the wound of one like to die, and you will have rendered a death-bed, sooner or later, calm and hopeful, which might have been disturbed by doubts.'

"This, then, is the offence for which I have been arraigned at the bar of the public with so unsparing a condemnation, declared unworthy of my high office, falsely accused of consulting aught else than the law of the land, and my own reason, in the judgments which I officially pronounce, and have had invoked against me 'the fires of Smithfield and the hangings of Salem.' From such a condemnation it is that I appeal to the calm, unbiased judgment of my countrymen, with a firm reliance upon its justice. J. W. EDMONDS.

"New York, August 1, 1853."

CONCLUSION.

It would be impossible to follow the subject through its various phases, and give any great portion of the articles for and against the spirituality of the manifestations, up to the present time. The days of angry disputation are passed. The frenzy of disturbed bigotry has subsided. The manifestations have become so common as to be no longer a wonder. The quiet of a calm conviction has settled upon a million of spiritualists; and new converts, although daily added, cease to attract attention. The foundation on which belief rests is stubborn facts, and no religion ever spread with such unprecedented rapidity, and none has ever rested on such positive foundation. But six years have passed by since the humble dwelling at Hydesville was made the centre of attraction for a continent, and now the occurrences, then confined to that locality, are known throughout the civilized world. The good it will accomplish, the design of its appearance, and the form in which it will continue, are all subjects for future history.